

STARS AND STRIPES[®]



Army drops rare cowardice case against sgt.
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Martha Stewart sentenced to 5 months in jail
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SATURDAY, JULY 17, 2004

Army seeks recruits from Air Force, Navy

Service wants sailors, airmen to fill some of its 30,000 new slots

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Philippines continues withdrawal from Iraq



Country pulls 11 troops from peacekeeping mission

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Left: A supporter of Angelo dela Cruz, the Filipino truck driver held hostage in Iraq, shouts slogans during a rally Friday in front of the Department of Foreign Affairs in Manila. The Philippines worked Friday to meet the demands of kidnapers holding the truck driver, withdrawing the head of its humanitarian mission in Iraq and 10 troops. Right: Philippines President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo prays during a Mass at San Sebastian Cathedral in Lipa, Philippines, on Friday. Arroyo remains tight-lipped on the handling of the hostage crisis.

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News Tracker ... What's new with old news

States

Western wildfires: An army of fire-fighters, helped by higher humidity and diminishing winds, gained partial control over a wildfire that burned 14 homes and forced evacuations of hundreds of others in Carson City, Nev.

"I think it's done its worst. I really think it has," said the fire incident commander, Marty Scheuerman. "Now we can do our job."

In California, meanwhile, a 10,000-acre wildfire forced 200 teenagers from two juvenile probation camps early Friday and continued to threaten rural hamlets on the edge of the Angeles National Forest. That blaze was 40 percent contained.

Police beating suit: A suspected car thief has filed a \$25 million claim with the city of Los Angeles over a videotaped police beating he contends left him with brain damage.

Stanley Miller alleged the June 23 beating also caused "spinal injuries, trunk-torso injuries, internal injuries, emotional distress, and bruises and contusions." If the city rejects the claim filed Thursday, Miller could seek damages through a lawsuit.

Michael Jackson case: An appeal by news media wanting access to court information in the Michael Jackson child molestation case went unheard for a week because a clerk refused to place it on the court docket, according to court papers.

Attorney Dominic Lanza, who filed the first appeal notice last week, said he checked five days later to make sure the matter was scheduled to be heard by Superior Court Judge Rodney Melville but was told by the appellate clerk it was not filed.

Lanza said it took until Thursday to get a clarification from the presiding justice of the California Second District Court of Appeal, who instructed the clerk that the notice of appeal should be filed.

Peterson murder trial: Scott Peterson's defense attorneys continued to pick apart the murder case against him as an exhaustive search for hard evidence that has turned up nothing incriminating.

Attorney Mark Geragos launched a barrage of insinuations Thursday that authorities abandoned reason in their zeal to get Peterson.

At nearly every turn of his cross examination, Geragos forced Modesto, Calif., police Detective Henry Hernandez to acknowledge that searches of San Francisco Bay yielded nothing to link Peterson to the killing of his pregnant wife, Laci.

Geragos

Tobacco legislation: The Senate approved a plan to give the government broad new powers to regulate the cigarette industry, including the ability to eliminate harmful ingredients in tobacco products and forbid advertising that appeals to children.

The measure empowering the Food and Drug Administration to oversee the sale, marketing and manufacturing of cigarettes was linked on the Senate floor Thursday to a \$12 billion buyout of tobacco farmers.

Cocaine boat: Five crewmembers of a fishing boat where authorities made the largest cocaine seizure in U.S. maritime history have been acquitted of all charges.

A federal jury Wednesday in San Diego found the two Russian and three Ukrainians not guilty of drug and conspiracy charges that carried a minimum of 10 years in prison. The defendants' first trial ended in a



Sonar side-effects: Beach-goers watch as a pod of about 200 melon-headed whales swim near shore in Haleiwa Bay, Hawaii, earlier this month. Many believe the very unusual near-shore flocking of the whales' reaction to picking up Navy sonar. Environmental and animal rights groups threatened Wednesday to sue the Navy unless it takes new steps to protect whales from booming waves of sonar designed to detect enemy submarines.

hung jury in March.

The defendants were part of the 10-man crew of the Svenska Maru, a fishing boat that was seized in 2001 off the coast of Mexico. More than 13 tons of cocaine were found below rotting squid bait.

World

Bird flu warning: Countries facing bird flu outbreaks should not kill wild birds in their efforts to keep the disease from spreading, the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization said Friday.

"Killing wild birds will not help to prevent or control avian influenza outbreaks," said Juan Lubroth of the FAO Animal Health Service said. "Wild birds are an important element of the ecosystem and should not be destroyed."

The FAO apparently was responding to Thailand's plan to selectively cull wild storks suspected of carrying the disease.

Russia's chemical weapons: Russia will not meet a 2007 deadline to destroy some 8,000 tons of chemical weapons, due to a lack of funds, the chairman of the Russian Federation Council's defense committee said Friday.

The Interfax-Military news agency quoted lawmaker Viktor Ozerov as saying the lack of federal funds would prevent new facilities for destroying weapons from being built and could result in dangerous chemicals leaking into the environment.

Madrid bombings: An Italian court has set a hearing on July 30 to rule on the extradition of a suspected mastermind of the Madrid, Spain, train bombings, a prosecutor in Milan said Friday.

The suspect, Rabei Osman Ahmed of Egypt, is held in Milan. He was arrested here on June 7 on an international warrant issued by Spanish authorities. Madrid is seeking his extradition.

If the court approves the extradition and no appeal is made, the request passes to the Justice Ministry for final approval, said prosecutor Donatella Grimaldi.

Earlier this week, the Milan prosecutors' office formally approved the extradition request.

Militant amnesty: A wanted militant turned himself in to Saudi diplomats in Syria in response to a royal amnesty offer that expires soon, Saudi newspapers report-

ed Friday.

Ibrahim al-Sadeq al-Qaidy had fought alongside Islamic extremists in Afghanistan and Bosnia, but had more recently been in hiding in Syria, the newspapers reported. It was not clear Friday what charges he faced and whether he was back in his homeland or was at the Saudi Embassy in Damascus.

Britain al-Qaida arrest: A Moroccan arrested in Britain was linked to one of al-Qaida's top leaders in Europe and spoke to him shortly before the Sept. 11 attacks in language suggesting he may have known of the plot, prosecutors said Thursday.

Farid Hilali, 35, telephoned Imad Eddin Barakat Yarkas, who suspected of leading an al-Qaida cell in Spain, a few weeks before Sept. 11, 2001, said prosecutor James Lewis, who spoke for the Spanish government in its effort to extradite Hilali.

Business

Tyco acquittal: It was a tense, emotional



Belnick

moment for former Tyco International lawyer Mark A. Belnick, who could have spent the next quarter-century behind bars.

Belnick wept with happiness after he was acquitted of charges he sold his silence for money and luxurious homes while two other company executives stole \$600 million.

A Manhattan jury returned the "not guilty" verdicts on Thursday in the fifth day of deliberations in state Supreme Court amid talks of a possible plea deal.

Napster case: A San Francisco judge has refused to dismiss a suit brought by major record companies against the original Napster's deep-pocketed funders, Hummer Winblad and Bertelsmann AG.

U.S. District Judge Marilyn Hall Patel made the decision Wednesday.

Universal Music Group and Capitol Records allege that Hummer and Bertelsmann did more than just write checks to online music service's inventor, Shawn Fanning. The record companies say the investors maintained hands-on control over the short-lived company and are, therefore, liable for copyright infringement.

Stories and photos from The Associated Press

Philippines pulls more soldiers from Iraq

GI, four civilians wounded in car bombing as insurgent attacks continue in Baghdad

BY DANICA KIRKA
The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — The Philippines withdrew 11 soldiers from Iraq on Friday to meet the demands of kidnappers holding a truck driver hostage, ignoring warnings from the United States that the move sends the wrong signal to terrorists.

The decision to pull out the head of the humanitarian mission and 10 other soldiers outraged Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo's allies in the war on terror, for fear that bargaining for the life of Angelo dela Cruz will set a dangerous precedent for the troops and citizens of other coalition members.

American troops and their Iraqi allies in the capital, Baghdad, continued to face attacks. Insurgents detonated a car bomb targeting a U.S. military convoy in Baghdad, wounding one U.S. soldier and four civilians, the American command and Iraqi police said.

Also Friday, attackers fired machine guns and rocket-propelled grenades at an Iraqi police patrol, killing one and wounding another, police officer Ammar Najj said.

The troubles came amid warnings by interim Prime Minister Iyad Allawi that insurgents would hit harder in the coming weeks. He announced the creation of a new intelligence service Thursday designed specifically to combat terrorism and vowed to annihilate guerrillas seeking to derail efforts to bring peace.

Suicide bombings, shootings and car bombs have rocked the country since the transfer of sovereignty from U.S. occupation officials to the interim government on June 28.

U.S. deaths in Iraq

The Associated Press

As of Thursday, 885 U.S. servicemen have died since the beginning of military operations in Iraq in March 2003, according to the Defense Department. Of those, 633 died as a result of hostile action and 232 died of nonhostile causes.

The British military has reported 59 deaths; Italy, 18; Spain, eight; Bulgaria and Poland, six each; Ukraine, four; Slovakia, three; Thailand, two; Denmark, El Salvador, Estonia,

Hungary, Latvia and the Netherlands have reported one death each.

Since May 1, 2003, when President Bush declared that major combat operations in Iraq had ended, 747 U.S. servicemen have died — 544 as a result of hostile action and 203 of non-hostile causes.

The latest deaths reported by military:

- No deaths reported.
- The latest identifications reported by the military:
- No identifications reported.

Insurgents also have kidnapped dozens of outsiders in hopes of pressuring countries taking part in the U.S.-led coalition to withdraw. The strategy also appears intended to further isolate the United States, which already provides the bulk of the 160,000-member multinational force in Iraq.

The Philippines, with 7 million workers overseas, proved particularly susceptible. Arroyo faced overwhelming domestic pressure from citizens, many of whom have family members working abroad.

People lit candles and held prayer vigils Friday for the safe return of dela Cruz, who was taken hostage while working as a truck driver here.

Hours later, 11 Filipino troops drove over the border into Kuwait in three vehicles and were seen off by a delegation of U.S. troops, said Lt. Col. Hashem Abdullah, an Iraqi officer at the border town of Safwan.

Arroyo's pullout decision does

not apply to thousands of Filipino workers who work at U.S. bases in Iraq, performing menial tasks such as serving food and cleaning toilets that free military personnel for crucial combat duty.

"The more than 4,000 Filipino workers in Iraq should not be there in the first place," said Connie Regalado, head of Migrant, a Filipino pressure group for overseas workers. "Most of them are in U.S. military installations, where they're the first target of Iraqi rebels."

Other coalition members, such as Australian Prime Minister John Howard, called the decision a mistake.

"If you give in, the game's over and they will increase the intensity of their attacks," he said.

White House press secretary Scott McClellan said Thursday the decision "sends the wrong signal to terrorists."

Many of the attacks have been blamed on Abu Musab al-Zarqawi's Tawhid and Jihad movement, which earlier claimed responsibility



An Iraqi police officer lifts a piece of a Volkswagen Beetle after a bomb inside it exploded Friday. It targeted an American military convoy, injuring one U.S. soldier and four civilians in Baghdad.

for beheading U.S. businessman Nicholas Berg and South Korean translator Kim Sun-il. Al-Zarqawi's group said Wednesday it had killed a Bulgarian hostage and threatened to kill his colleague. Video broadcast on al-Jazeera showed one of two Bulgarian hostages, later identified as Georgi Lazov, kneeling before three masked men.

The same day, police discovered a headless body northwest of the city of Beji. The remains were turned over to the U.S. military for identification, officials said. Bulgaria said fingerprints from the body had been sent there for identification.

Associated Press writer Hrvorje Jranjic in Manila, Philippines, contributed to this report.

Bremer may testify before Congress

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — L. Paul Bremer, the former head of the U.S.-led occupation in Iraq, may testify about prison abuse at a congressional hearing next week, while more cases of possible mistreatment of Iraqi prisoners have come to Congress' attention and need investigation by the Pentagon, a lawmaker said.

"Each day that comes along, new incidents that occurred in the past" are revealed and will need to be investigated, Sen. John Warner, chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, said Thursday.

Despite a number of hearings and media revelations in the months since the abuse scandal



L. Paul Bremer

broke, questions linger about the extent of wrongdoing at U.S. military prisons, how it happened and who should be held accountable.

Before the Senate recesses next week, Warner wants Bremer to testify at a public hearing.

Pentagon creates new office to deal with prisoner abuse reports

BY SANDRA JONTZ
Stars and Stripes

ARLINGTON, Va. — Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld signed an order Friday creating the Office of Detainee Affairs, a Pentagon-level office to deal primarily with the International Committee of Red Cross and their reports of alleged prisoner abuse.

"The key element here will be the relationship with the International Red Cross," said Ryan Henry, principal deputy undersecretary of defense for Policy.

The ICRC reportedly has filed many reports of prisoner abuse and currently is accusing the Defense Department and CIA of hiding detainees.

"We want to have a system that can elevate their concerns to keep policymakers as responsive [sic] as possible," Henry told Pentagon reporters. The office will be the "single focal point" in talks between the ICRC and the Pentagon.

Who will head the new office and who will make up the committee looking into the reports has yet to be determined, he said, but the office will fall under the Undersecretary for Policy, Doug Feith.

The office's creation also is an attempt to repair relations with the international committee, which intercedes on U.S. servicemen's behalf if they are taken prisoner.

The department "appreciates the work by the International Red Cross," Henry said.

"Not only do they help us understand how we can do a better job, but they do a very critical job in protecting our soldiers."

Reports from the ICRC will now be "brought from the field" to the centralized Pentagon office, Henry said.

"In the past, they've been left at the field level, but now they will be forwarded up" to be reviewed by a joint committee, make up of members from the policy office, Joint Chiefs of Staff, and service departments.

E-mail Sandra Jontz at: jontzs@stripes.osd.mil

Idaho GIs told to use 'themes' with media

BY CHUCK OXLEY
The Associated Press

BOISE, Idaho — The Idaho National Guard has told soldiers to use five approved "themes" when talking to the media, including support for war in Iraq and confidence in the superiority of American troops.

The suggestions were made on the front page of "Snakebite," the official newsletter of the 116th Brigade Combat Team.

It does not prohibit soldiers from speaking about other issues, but says that referring to the themes "adds continuity to the message we are portraying as a unit."

The other messages include

OK'd topics include support for war, confidence in U.S. troops

pride for being on active duty, eagerness to work with coalition forces and appreciation for family and employers.

"Those themes are the things we feel are consistent with what we're doing. Those are the messages we want out there right now," said Capt. Monte Hibbert, who wrote the article.

Hibbert spoke by telephone from Fort Bliss, Texas, where he is training with 2,000 other Idaho guard members for a one-year tour in Iraq beginning this fall.

The 116th started deploying soldiers to Texas in early June, and there was heavy coverage of sol-

diers and their families in Idaho newspapers and television.

Hibbert said he did not intend to restrict soldiers' comments to the press.

But Charles Sheehan-Miles, director of the Washington-based Veterans for Common Sense, said that's not the message that will be perceived by most rank-and-file soldiers.

"I suspect it's going to be received with a good deal of cynicism," he said, because the military is increasingly "trying to control the message, because the leaders and the Pentagon have taken a lot of hits on the war."

Val Limburg, a journalism ethics and law professor emeritus at Washington State University, said it would be unethical if soldiers were being asked to cover up something that was wrong. He said the approved themes were more of a public relations issue.

Still, Limburg wondered if the military was returning to an era when it avoided uncontrolled media contacts.

"In World War Two, we had a War Department and everything was cleared by the government before it went out as news. And the press went along with that because they wanted to win the war, too," he said.

During the Cold War and as recently as the 1991 Gulf War, contact between rank-and-file service members and the media was generally taboo. Military personnel were instructed to avoid talking to news reporters and to report all contacts to their local public affairs officer.

But Hibbert says the attitude has changed over time, particularly in the last decade and as news technology has changed and reporters have become "embedded" with particular units.

Because of the increased contact, even the lowest privates now receive training on dealing with the media.

"We actually try to give them some experience by simulating interviews and role-playing," Hibbert said.

U.S. drops cowardice charges

GI who sought help for panic attacks cleared

The Associated Press

DENVER — The military has decided not to pursue charges against a U.S. soldier accused of cowardice after he sought help for panic attacks.

After Staff Sgt. Georg-Andreas Pogany asked for counseling while in Iraq, his commanders sent him home to Fort Carson to face a court-martial on a cowardice charge, which can be punishable by death.

The Army later replaced it with the lesser dereliction-of-duty charge, which could have put Pogany behind bars for six months.

On Thursday, Pogany and military officials confirmed the case is finished.

Sgt. 1st Class Blake Waltman, a public affairs officer with the Army's Special Operations Command at Fort Bragg, N.C., said charges have been dropped because the military has learned Pogany "may have a medical problem that requires care and treatment."

Pogany, 32, had been the first U.S. soldier since Vietnam to be charged with cowardice.

A five-year veteran, Pogany said his problems surfaced after he saw the mangled body of an Iraqi man cut in half by American troops.

Pogany said he has physical and psychological problems that stem from brain damage caused by a reaction to the anti-malaria drug Lariam. He is part of a military study looking into complaints from U.S. troops exposed to drugs and chemicals.

Pogany, assigned to a Green Beret interrogation team with the 10th Special Forces Group, began vomiting after seeing the Iraqi civilian's body three days after being sent to Iraq.

Pogany said he hopes to retire from the Army soon.

Pinned by a star



FRANK MAGNI/Courtesy U.S. Army

Actor Vince Vaughn pins sergeant stripes on Joel Tilley, an anti-armor platoon gunner with Detachment D, 1st Battalion, 501st Parachute Infantry Regiment, during Tilley's promotion ceremony July 3 at Forward Operating Base Salerno, Afghanistan. Vaughn visited with troops, signed autographs and posed for photos with soldiers, in addition to helping make Tilley's promotion official. The actor has appeared in such movies as "Made," "Old School," "Starsky and Hutch" and "Dodgeball." Said Tilley: "I liked his movies, and since he was going to be here I thought it would be kind of cool if he would pin me. It makes me proud that he appreciated us enough to come over and show his [gratitude]."

After prison scandal, Rumsfeld rarely seen

BY ROBERT BURNS
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld, for years the most public face of the Bush administration's war on terrorism, has suddenly become scarce.

Buried by the Iraq prisoner abuse scandal and constrained by the presidential election campaign, the Pentagon chief who spearheaded the Afghanistan and Iraq wars has been relegated to a less visible role.

Once seemingly in danger of being fired over the prisoner abuse, Rumsfeld appears to have survived. Yet some wonder whether the White House might still conclude he is a political liability and prefer he leave this summer.

"Donald Rumsfeld has gone from being the most popular spokesperson for the Bush administration policies to something of a pariah," said Loren Thompson of the Lexington Institute, a think tank.

"Whereas before the White House was happy to see him speaking in public whenever he chose, now it kind of cringes for fear of what the results might be," Thompson added.

Since an April 27 news conference — one day before CBS News broadcast photographs of U.S. soldiers abusing Iraqis at the Abu Ghraib prison — Rumsfeld has appeared in the Pentagon briefing room just twice, on May 4 and June 17. In April he had four Pentagon news conferences; in March he had three.

Larry Di Rita, the chief spokesperson for Rumsfeld, disputed the notion that the defense secretary has moved off the public stage.

He said that since early May Rumsfeld has conducted 12 news conferences or media appearances at home and abroad, eight public speeches, seven television or radio interviews and two public congressional hearings.

"He has probably reached millions of Americans in those activities," Di Rita said.

First class for GIs

DALLAS — Eight soldiers flying home from Iraq for two weeks of R&R flew in style instead of coach after first-class passengers offered to swap seats with them.

"The soldiers were very, very happy, and the whole aircraft had a different feeling," flight attendant Lorrie Gorman told The Dallas Morning News in Thursday's editions.

The June 29 seat-swap on American Airlines Flight 866 from Atlanta to Chicago started before boarding, when a businessman approached one of the soldiers and traded his seat.

When the swapping was done, "the other two first-class passengers wanted to give up their seats, too, but they couldn't find any more soldiers," Gorman said.

Another flight attendant, Candl Spradlin, said she was impressed with the acts of good will.

Marine's return

QUANTICO, Virginia — It could be weeks or months before a Marine who disappeared in Iraq and later turned up in Lebanon is deemed fit to return to duty, a spokesman said.

Cpl. Wassef Ali Hassoun arrived at Quantico Marine base on Thursday after leaving Germany, where he had undergone six days of evaluation at a U.S. military hospital.

Lt. Col. David Lapan, a Marine Corps spokesman, said Hassoun would continue to undergo a "repatriation" process until the military support team monitoring his recovery decides he is ready to go back to work. His home station is Camp Lejeune, North Carolina.

Hassoun has not been accused of any offense, although the Marines said after he disappeared in 2003 in Iraq that he was an "unauthorized absence."

He reappeared July 8 at the U.S. Embassy in Beirut. It remains unclear how he traveled from Iraq to Lebanon, where he was born and still has some relatives.

From The Associated Press

Army looking to recruit from Air Force and Navy

BY LISA BURGESS

Stars and Stripes

ARLINGTON, Va. — With 30,000 billets to fill in the next two years and missions in Iraq and Afghanistan to man for the foreseeable future, the Army is hoping to entice sailors and airmen to switch uniforms.

The Army's new "Operation Blue to Green" program is designed to attract members of the Air Force and Navy, which unlike the Army are trying to save the size of their respective forces.

The Army began working on the program about four months ago, and a few finishing touches remain before the program is handed, according to Brig. Gen. Sean Byrne, the Army's Director of Military Personnel Policy.

But the Army already has posted an advertisement for Blue to Green on its Web site, www.gourmy.com, as was first reported by U.S. News & World Report.

Meanwhile, over the next 14 months, Army recruiters will go to Navy and Air Force bases to talk to servicemembers who might be eligible for the transfer program, Byrne said in a Friday roundtable discussion with Pentagon reporters.

"We are going to actively recruit these [servicemembers], with the full concurrence and support" of the Navy and Air Force, Byrne said.

Such servicemembers are attractive to the Army because "it's a population that has already served and been successful in their career," he said.

The new program is particularly focused on sailors and airmen in grades E-1 to E-5, Byrne said, as well as "some junior officers with the skills we need."

Selectees will undergo a four-week version of boot camp that the Army is calling the "Warrior Transition Course," to be held at Fort Knox, Ky., Byrne said.

The Warrior course will replace the normal nine-week boot camp the Army uses to train individuals with prior experience from other services who move into the Army.

The goal is to ensure that "there's no break in service" for those who are selected for the program, Byrne said — including ensuring that servicemembers receive a continuous paycheck and no interruptions to medical and other benefits.

The Army is looking in particular for enlisted personnel whose Air Force Specialty Code or Navy rate convert directly to an Army Military Occupational Specialty, Byrne said.

Army personnel specialists have found 120 AFSCs that translate directly to 37 Army MOSs. Army MOS categories are broad-

er than the Air Force's, Byrne explained.

The Navy has 112 ratings that translate directly into 42 Army MOSs, Byrne said.

Servicemembers whose AFSC or rate transfer directly into an MOS will receive any enlistment bonus that the Army currently offers for that skill, Byrne said.

The Army will also consider accepting airmen and sailors whose specialty does not directly convert to the Army MOS, but who are willing to reclassify and learn a new skill the Army needs, Byrne said.

Airmen and sailors who are reclassifying will also receive any bonus that is available for their new MOS, Byrne said.

Those servicemembers will naturally require additional skills training once they graduate from the Warrior course, Byrne said. Bonuses aren't guaranteed for servicemembers who sign up for Blue to Green.

But such stipends are relatively plentiful in the Army — 190 out of the Army's 345 MOSs have a signing bonus, Byrne said. For MOSs that offer bonuses, the average stipend for a three-year enlistment is \$4,200, while the average bonus for a six-year hitch is \$8,300, Byrne said.

For more information on Operation Blue to Green, go to www.gourmy.com/btg/index.htm. E-mail Lisa Burgess at burgessl@stripes.osd.mil.

U.S. Navy expands its early-out plan

BY SANDRA JONTZ

Stars and Stripes

ARLINGTON, Va. — Navy officials anticipate between 400 and 600 sailors will use the service's Early Transition Program, which lets eligible sailors separate up to 12 months earlier than planned.

The program has been changed since being introduced last year, and will let sailors separate a year earlier, rather than six months.

About 560 sailors took advantage of the program last year, said Lt. j.g. Kyle Raines, a spokesman for Navy Personnel Command.

"We want all of our good sailors to stick around and stay Navy ... and this is really designed for those who have jobs or educational opportunities lined up, and we're giving them the opportunity to fill those personal goals a year earlier," Raines said.

The program is not available to sailors under a selective re-enlistment bonus or in a rating that is SRB eligible, or in who are SEALs (Sea, Air and Land), explosive ordnance disposal, divers or Special Warfare Combatant-crewman, or in a nuclear rating.

Of the sailors in those special categories, the reasoning they're not eligible is because they are in critical or undermanned ratings, or because we offered them SRBs for re-enlistment," Raines said.

Sailors can submit requests, going through their chain of command, to Navy Personnel Command. All separations under the program must be effected by Sept. 15.

For the most part, officials anticipate mostly first-termers will take advantage, Raines said. "They make up the largest percentage of people getting out of the Navy anyway, and frankly, the longer you're in, the longer it likely to stay."

"For sailors with impending educational or civilian career plans, this program could offer just the extra time and opportunity they need to get started on a new life," Vice Adm. Gerry Howing, chief of Naval Personnel, said in a statement. "I am delighted that this great retention we are continuing to experience has allowed us to offer the program again this year."

As of June, the Navy was on pace to retain 59.6 percent of eligible sailors in Zone A, or those with less than six years of service, for fiscal 2004. The goal is 56 percent. In Zone B (those with six to 10 years of service) the pace is 73.2 percent, above the target of 70 percent.

The percentages do not count those whose applications have yet to be processed, Raines said.

If the Navy surpasses its retention goals, officials could adjust recruitment goals to keep personnel numbers in check.

More information found in Navy message NAVADM151/04, and available at www.bupers.navy.mil/. E-mail Sandra Jontz at jontzs@stripes.osd.mil.

Europe commissaries upgrade with coupon scanning technology

New equipment makes sure discount is for exact product being purchased

BY JESSICA INIGO

Stars and Stripes

DARMSTADT, Germany — A technology upgrade to commissaries in Europe now ensures shoppers are using the correct coupons to purchase their groceries.

All commissaries in Europe completed the computer upgrade about two weeks ago.

Previously, coupons were manually inspected and sometimes used for the wrong product, according to Kay Blakely, consumer advocate for Defense Commissary Agency, Europe.

Now, computers compare the product code to the item listed on the coupon and, if there is not an exact match, the coupon is kicked back, Blakely said.

Because of the upgrade, some shoppers may experience problems with their coupons not being accepted. Blakely suggests closer inspection when using coupons.

"We certainly do not want to discourage people from using coupons," Blakely said. "If a shopper uses coupons for extra savings, more power to them."

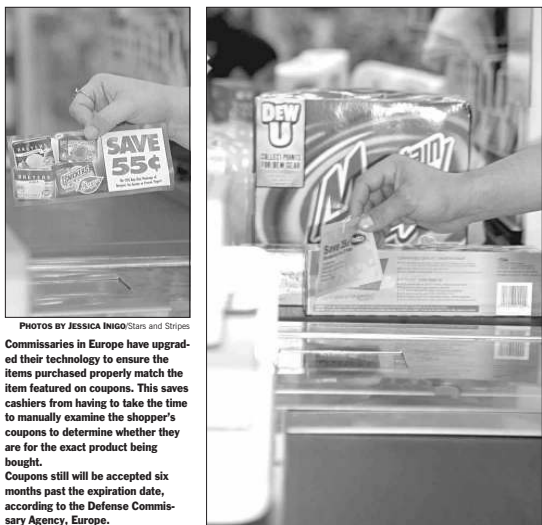
She said shoppers must select the exact product featured on a coupon. For example, if a coupon offers savings for a specific name brand of a 16-ounce package of dry soup, a shopper cannot use the coupon on the same brand of canned soup.

"It's not going to be an exact match, or it won't go," she said.

Coupons should be given to the cashier prior to the transaction, with the exception of two-for-one or buy-one-get-one-free coupons. These are best left with the products.

Coupons in Europe are still accepted six months after the expiration date.

E-mail Jessica Inigo at inigoj@mail.stripes.osd.mil.



PHOTOS BY JESSICA INIGO/Stars and Stripes

Commissaries in Europe have upgraded their technology to ensure the items purchased properly match the item featured on coupons. This saves cashiers from having to take the time to manually examine the shopper's coupons to determine whether they are for the exact product being bought.

Coupons still will be accepted six months past the expiration date, according to the Defense Commissary Agency, Europe.

On common ground

NATO's first senior NCO steps up effort to standardize alliance's enlisted corps

By KEVIN DOUGHERTY

Stars and Stripes

CASTEAU, Belgium — On a recent tour of NATO installations, a Turkish soldier approached the top noncommissioned officer at NATO to commend him for trying to improve the alliance's enlisted corps.

"You give us hope," Marine Corps Sgt. Maj. Alford L. McMichael said, repeating what the senior soldier had said. "You make us dream, again. We can be important to our country."

The effort to elevate — through training and education — the posture and performance of the NATO enlisted corps is primarily aimed at NATO's newer members, nations such as Estonia or Romania. But even old allies recognize the value of setting a uniform standard and sticking to it, McMichael said.

Achieving a level of standardization in areas such as job performance and personal conduct will take time to sink in, perhaps as long as a generation, said McMichael, the alliance's first senior NCO. And yet that's a main focus of his and Gen. James L. Jones, the supreme allied commander Europe.

"Some of these nations only think leadership starts at the top, so they become stagnant," McMichael said during a recent interview in his office at SHAPE headquarters in Casteau.

"In our system," he said, "we teach leadership from the lowest level."

"So, if something happens to [a unit's officer], a platoon sergeant doesn't wait until a new captain gets sent out to a fight. He steps up and leads the charge."

A case in point is the NCO campaign itself.

McMichael was set to retire last year after a four-year hitch as the Marine Corps' command sergeant major. Jones, who has known and worked with McMichael for years, asked him to consider postponing his retirement to help the alliance develop a more professional NCO corps.

The 52-year-old took Jones up on his offer, arriving at SHAPE a year ago.

"The biggest apprehension came from the established countries, because they thought their culture would have to change," McMichael said. "We're not asking [them] to change. We're asking [them] to partner with us to help us bring the others up to that level."

In September, McMichael and his staff plan to present Jones with a formal set of standards to guide the alliance's NCO corps. The standards focus on such is-



KEVIN DOUGHERTY/Stars and Stripes

A year ago, at the urging of Gen. James L. Jones, supreme allied commander Europe, Marine Corps Sgt. Maj. Alford L. McMichael — shown above with hundreds of commemorative coins he has accumulated during the years — delayed his retirement to become the first senior noncommissioned officer to represent NATO's enlisted force.

suces as good order and discipline, training and personal appearance. A formal definition of an NCO is still in the works, but a preliminary draft refers to noncommissioned officers as "the backbone" of the alliance.

"The NCOs are going to be key to this new NATO Response Force," said U.S. Air Force Col. Mark P. Sullivan, commandant of the NATO School in Oberammergau, Germany.

At the 2002 summit in Prague, Czech Republic, NATO nations concluded that the alliance needed to transform itself to stay relevant in a changing world. Among other things, the allies decided to form a quick response force and to create a leaner and more flexible force structure, one that empowers NCOs and follows a common standard.

To address the last issue, the alliance has decided to create an academy for NCOs assigned to, or working with, the alliance. There's no firm date, but it's likely to happen sooner rather than later.

"This is overdue," Sullivan said. "We've needed this for some time."

Up until a couple of years ago, the NATO School in Oberammergau was open only to officers. However, expansion and the Partnership for Peace program for non-NATO nations led the school to open its doors on a limited basis to NCOs, though Sullivan noted there was some resistance at first.

Sullivan said instructors have "found an incredible discrepancy" in some classroom groups between students of various nations.

Catherine Combe is a senior noncommissioned officer in the French army. She also teaches at Oberammergau and finds many of the students eager to learn.

"They don't even know what they are hungry for," Combe said. And yet, she adds, all of the time and money and effort go to waste if the sponsoring nation doesn't display the same eagerness to improve.

McMichael says he can help on that front by putting a NATO, not an American, face on it and by preaching the team concept.

"Our goal," he said, "is the next generation."

E-mail Kevin Dougherty at: doughertyk@mail.estripes.osd.mil

Defense measure will help fund war

By ALAN FRAM

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — House-Senate bargainers agreed on a \$417 billion defense bill that includes \$25 billion for U.S. forces in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The compromise measure, which is mostly for 2005, also has money for war refugees in Sudan and American diplomats in Baghdad and Kabul. And it will provide \$25 million each for buttressing security this summer in Boston and New York as they host, respectively, the Democratic and Republican presidential nominating conventions.

Congress is expected to approve the legislation next week, lawmakers' last stretch of work before recessing until September.

With troops under fire in Iraq and Afghanistan, President Bush and members of both parties want the measure completed before the political party gatherings.

Speed is also a factor because lawmakers and the Pentagon are not sure there would otherwise be enough cash to pay for the two wars in the final weeks of the government's budget year, which runs through Sept. 30.

House Appropriations Committee Chairman Bill Young and other lawmakers said the legislation includes the \$25 billion Bush requested in May for U.S. operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. The money will be available as soon as the bill is enacted.

The \$25 billion is expected to be less than half what will ultimately be needed for the two wars next year.

Messages of Support



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Where you left behind, the love you love

To calm a threatening beast.

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Study: too few family members get support

Family support professionals and volunteers have expanded programs to help military families cope with longer, more frequent separations due to operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

But weaknesses in coordination, communication and command oversight still deny too many families access to the information and help they need, says a new study by the National Military Family Association.

Just as the operational military must transform missions and force structure for a protracted war on terrorism so must family support change for a new era, says the report, "Serving the Home Front: An Analysis of Military Family Support from September 11, 2001, through March 31, 2004."

Stabilizing military home life requires more command involvement, better marketing and outreach to families living off base, standardized staff training, and stronger partnerships with communities including local agencies, schools and even media, the report says.

NMFA, the "voice of military families," wrote the report based on responses from more than 2,500 military spouses to an online survey. NMFA also conducted spouse focus groups and asked family support providers to complete questionnaires. A NMFA team then analyzed the results,

shaped recommendations and wrote the 36-page report.

Joyce Wessel Raezer, NMFA director of government relations, said family support programs weren't ready for the number and length of deployments and mobilizations ordered since the 9/11 attacks.

"There were a lot of programs that people thought would work. What wasn't anticipated was the extra burden of communicating what's available, helping families sort out realistic expectations."

Managing expectations are the challenge, she said, "every time a deployment is extended or communication with a servicemember breaks down. Nobody was prepared to take that on, to say, 'We've got to do some educating here to help our families more realistically understand what to expect.'"

Family support before 9/11 assumed predictable, limited deployments, not tours of a year or more for hundreds of thousands

of troops, many of them mobilized National Guard members and reservists.

"A church would say 'Let's get a support group for families of deployed servicemembers.' That's a nice idea," said Raezer. "But how do you sustain those volunteer ef-

in the Army. One son completed a tour in Iraq. The other could be sent. Evers said she hopes the report is read "by everyone, from headquarter staffs and service leaders down to unit commanders and volunteers, so that at every level they learn how to improve on what they do for families."

Some of what's being done is extraordinary and imaginative, NMFA officials found. Its own study was funded by Sears, Roebuck and Co., with part of a \$2 million donation to NMFA.

Most of that money is underwriting Operation Purple, special summer camps for military children in the United States to help deal with the stress of parents deployed. The full NMFA report and details of Operation Purple can be found at www.nmfa.org.

But NMFA also found disappointing levels of support. Frustration is higher among families living off base and, in some cases, hundreds of miles from military

communities and base support programs. NMFA took special note of problems for families in understanding Tricare, accessing preventive mental health services and finding childcare.

Lisa Clay, whose husband Don is a Marine Corps platoon sergeant running daily patrols in Iraq, helped research and write the report. Military spouses overall, she said, "aren't disgruntled" but they expect more thoughtful, coordinated help. Clay recalled, for example, that a hospital commander arranged a briefing for families on changes to Tricare. But it occurred at 11 a.m. on a weekday when many spouses are working.

Clay also noted that deploying troops are encouraged to provide spouses with powers of attorney. Yet some base finance offices don't even recognize those powers, turn away spouses seeking copies of, or changes to, member leave and earnings statements, she said.

With family support programs so dependent on command involvement, one of NMFA's many recommendations is that attention to family needs be made a rated item on unit or base commanders' fitness reports.

Comments are welcomed. Write Military Update, P.O. Box 231111, Centerville, VA 20120-1111, e-mail mlupdate@aol.com or visit: www.militaryupdate.com

MILITARY UPDATE

Tom Philpott

"There were a lot of programs that people thought would work. What wasn't anticipated was the extra burden of communicating what's available, helping families sort out realistic expectations."


Joyce Wessel Raezer

NMFA director of government relations

forts over the long term?"

The report emphasizes the positive, describing successful initiatives and encouraging broad reforms. It doesn't press for new, costly programs. It seeks better coordination, more aggressive and thoughtful communication, consistency in family support training.

Susan Evers, project coordinator, has a husband and two sons



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Sailors recoup lost beer day in Naples

BY KENDRA HELMER

Stars and Stripes

NAPLES, Italy — In the second aircraft carrier visit to Naples this month, sailors are packing local and base businesses.

On its cruise home to Norfolk, Va., the USS George Washington arrived Wednesday for a port call. After spending nearly five months in the Persian Gulf, several of the 5,000 sailors said all they wanted to do was relax rather than run around seeing the sites.

Dozens of sailors packed the Capodichino base bar Thursday afternoon.

"We got stressed out," said Petty Officer 3rd Class Alex Luzon. "It was good to get to Italy with the cool weather," he said. Though temperatures here are in the 90s, he said it beats launching and recovering aircraft in the triple-digit temperatures of the Gulf.

The carrier and Carrier Air Wing 7 have flown more than 7,200 sorties since leaving Norfolk on Jan. 20. For Operation Iraqi Freedom, it launched more than 1,500 sorties, dropping about 82 tons of ordnance in support of ground troops in Iraq, said Lt. John E. Gay, ship spokesman.

"The sentiment we got from the ground troops was just the fact that aircraft came from the area seemed to deter any uprising," Gay said.

The carrier was in the Gulf from Feb. 17 through July 5. Sailors also had a port visit to Souda Bay, Crete, and three visits to Jebel Ali, United Arab Emirates.

At one point, sailors spent 52 days at sea. Normally after 45 straight days at sea with no port call, sailors are treated to a steel-beach picnic — a barbecue



KENDRA HELMER/Stars and Stripes

Sailors who work long hours launching and recovering aircraft on the aircraft carrier USS George Washington enjoy a day off by drinking some cold ones Thursday at the base club in Naples, Italy.

held on the flight deck — and two beers apiece. Several sailors grumbled that they didn't get a beer day.

"Our morale is so low, the only thing we want to do is drink," said Petty Officer 3rd Class James Moore, a fire controlman.

The decision whether to have a beer day was at the discretion of the commanding officer, Capt. Martin Erdosy, Gay said.

"Quite frankly, we couldn't take the day off," Gay said.

While several sailors relaxed at the bar, scores of others shopped downtown and on base and traveled to Rome and Pompeii.

"It's been a great deployment,"

said Chief Warrant Officer 2 Charles Gunter, a radio officer, as he shopped at the Navy Exchange. "[The port visit] is like coming home."

Gunter previously was stationed in Naples. He has caught up with friends and bought leather purses for his wife and Italian gifts for his 5-year-old son, who was born here.

"Now I'm broke," he said, smiling.

Also in port in Naples is the USS Roosevelt, a Mayport, Fla.-based destroyer that isn't part of the Washington strike group.

E-mail Kendra Helmer at: helmerk@mail.estripes.osd.mil

AF Academy begins random steroid checks

By ROBERT WELLER

The Associated Press

DENVER — The Air Force Academy has begun randomly testing everyone from cadets to civilian employees for steroids amid an investigation into the use of the drug among students.

The tests began last month and include active-duty military personnel at the school and students at the academy's preparatory school, along with about 4,000 cadets and a handful of civilian workers.

Four cadets, including two members of the Air Force football team, were charged with possession or distribution of steroids, the school announced last week. A fifth cadet is under investigation, academy spokesman Johnny Whitaker said.

The school announced the charges against running back Matthew Ward and linebacker Overton Spence Jr., along with two other cadets, on July 6. Ward and Spence were suspended from the football team during the investigation, academy spokeswoman Capt. Kim Melchor said.

The school's superintendent will decide whether Spence and Ward should face a court-martial. The other two, Eric M. Swartz and Jonathan S. Belkowitz, also could face a court-martial.

U.K. terror exercise

Americans in the United Kingdom may encounter a mock terror alert in the central part of the country Sunday.

Exercise Horizon will engage more than 2,000 law enforcement and medical officials and 400 volunteer "casualties" to test their response to a poison gas attack. It will take place at an undisclosed location.

Air Force members stationed at RAF Lakenheath and RAF Mildenhall will not participate in the exercise, according to base public affairs officers.

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Photo by Anas Dulami/Stars and Stripes

IN THE STATES



Martha Stewart is flanked by her lawyers Robert Morvillo, left, and John Tighe outside Manhattan federal court after her sentencing Friday in New York. Stewart was sentenced Friday to five months in prison and five months of home confinement for lying about a stock sale. She also received 5 months of home detention.

Martha Stewart receives 5-month prison sentence

BY ERIN MCCLAM
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Domestic icon Martha Stewart was handed a prison term of just five months Friday for lying about a stock sale. After asking the judge for leniency, she emerged defiant from the courthouse to say she was being persecuted and declared, "I'll be back."

"I'm not afraid. Not afraid whatsoever. I'm very sorry it had to come to this," she told a crowd of media and supporters afterward, speaking in a strong voice on the courthouse steps.

Stewart, who was also ordered to serve five months of home confinement and fined \$30,000, did win a key victory when U.S. District Court Judge Miriam Goldman Cedarbaum stayed her sentence, pending appeal, a process that could last many months.

Peter Bacanovic, the high-powered stockbroker who was convicted along with Stewart of lying about her stock sale in December 2001, received the same sentence of five months in prison and five

Stock punishment

Details of Martha Stewart's sentence, handed down Friday by U.S. District Judge Miriam Goldman Cedarbaum:

■ **PRISON:** Five months. Cedarbaum accepted a defense request that the Bureau of Prisons assign Stewart to a federal prison in Danbury, Conn., close to her home in Westport. Stewart will be allowed to stay out of prison while she appeals her conviction.

■ **HOME DETENTION:** Five months, following the prison term. Stewart chose her home in Bedford, N.Y. She must remain in her home except for employment activities, medical appointments, religious observances —

but those exceptions must total no more than 48 hours per week. For one day a week, she may not leave under any circumstances. Cedarbaum is considering whether Stewart must wear an electronic monitoring bracelet on her ankle. Must pay any costs associated with home detention, as determined by a probation officer.

■ **SUPERVISED RELEASE:** Two years, in which Stewart must report to a probation officer.

■ **FINE:** \$30,000. Must pay immediately.

■ **COURT FEE:** \$400. Must pay immediately.

— The Associated Press

months home confinement.

Stewart's sentence also was far less than it could have been. Experts had predicted she would receive 10 to 16 months for her conviction on charges she lied to federal prosecutors about the reason and circumstances surrounding

her well-timed sale of stock in In-Clone Systems Inc.

In the courtroom, Stewart, 62, projected a much less confident image, appealing in a shaky voice for a reduced sentence and asking the judge to "remember all the good I have done."

Medicare changes policy to now regard obesity as an illness

BY ELIZABETH WOLFE
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Medicare now recognizes obesity as an illness, a change in policy that may allow millions of overweight Americans to make medical claims for treatments such as stomach surgery and diet programs.

Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson

said, "Obesity is a critical public health problem in our country that causes millions of Americans to suffer unnecessary health problems and to die prematurely."

Treating obesity-related illnesses results in billions of dollars in health-care costs, Thompson said.

"With this new policy, Medicare will be able to review scientific evidence in order to determine which interventions improve health outcomes for seniors and disabled Americans who are obese," Thompson told a Senate panel on Thursday.

With the removal of language in Medicare policy that said obesity is not an illness, beneficiaries will be able to request a government review of medical evidence to determine whether certain treatments for obesity can be covered.

Though Medicare and Medicaid programs cover sicknesses caused by obesity — including

type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, several types of cancer and gallbladder disease — the previous policy meant that weight-loss therapies have often been denied coverage.

"The medical science will now determine whether we provide coverage for the treatments that reduce complications and improve quality of life for the millions of Medicare beneficiaries who are obese," said Mark McClellan,

administrator of the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, which oversees health insurance programs for the elderly, disabled and poor.

Some detractors of the change said it is based on unsound science.

"We have a tremendously exaggerated fear of higher than average weight in this culture," said University of Colorado law professor Paul Campos, author of "The Obesity Myth."

"What's partly baseless is this notion that the government needs to intervene to make Americans thinner," Campos said.

HHS said the policy change is not expected to immediately alter Medicare coverage, and no figures were provided on potential costs to taxpayers. The Medicare agency said it may meet this fall to review scientific evidence on various surgical procedures related to obesity.

You can find almost anything in the Stripes Classifieds.

AP requests release of Bush service records

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Associated Press asked a federal judge Friday to order the Pentagon to quickly turn over a full copy of President Bush's military service record.

The White House has released partial documentation of Bush's military service in the Texas Air National Guard but has not complied with the news service's Freedom of Information Act request for any record archived at a state library records center in

Texas, the AP said in a court filing.

Records released so far do not put to rest questions over whether Bush fulfilled his National Guard service for a period during the Vietnam War, the AP argued in papers filed in federal court in New York.

Those records came from federal records clearingshouses. Texas law requires separate record keeping for state National Guard service, and those records should exist on microfilm in Austin, the AP said.

"A significant, ongoing controversy exists over the president's military service during the Vietnam War, specifically whether he performed his required service between May and October 1972," lawyers for the AP wrote.

"The public has an intense and legitimate interest in knowing the facts concerning the president's military service. Reviewing the microfilm copy of the personnel file at the Texas Records center could well answer the questions that have been raised," the lawyers wrote.



Judge strikes ban on violent games

State's law covering some mature video game sales ruled too narrow

By GENE JOHNSON

The Associated Press

SEATTLE — A federal judge struck down Washington state's ban on selling some violent video games to minors, calling it a violation of free speech.

U.S. District Judge Robert Lasnik wrote Thursday that depictions of violence have been used throughout the country's history to convey important social messages, and that the Supreme Court has never upheld bans on violent depictions under obscenity laws.

The state's ban sought to prevent minors from buying or renting games that portray "realistic or photographic-like depictions of aggressive conflict" in which the players kill or injure law enforcement officers. The law included a provision to fine retailers \$500 for violations.

Lasnik said the law was too narrow because it arbitrarily banned

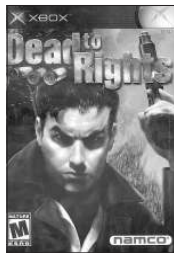
violence against police officers but not other depictions of violence, and too broad because it was unclear what games would fall under the ban.

"Would a game built around 'The Simpsons' or the 'Looney Tunes' characters be 'realistic' enough to trigger the act?" he wrote.

"The real problem is that [a store] clerk might know everything there is to know about the game and yet not be able to determine whether it can legally be sold to a minor."

To obey the law, he said, store clerks would tend to be overly cautious in selling games to minors and game makers would tend to be overly cautious in designing them — resulting in a chilling effect on free speech.

The game industry welcomed the ruling and said it will continue to encourage retailers to voluntarily refuse to sell mature-rated games to children under 17, as movie theaters voluntarily check



SHNS

Video games such as Microsoft's Xbox game "Dead to Rights" have beat Washington state's attempt to ban selling some violent electronic games to minors.

IDs for youngsters heading into R-rated movies.

"We were obviously really gratified by the ruling," said Doug Lowenstein, president of the Washington, D.C.-based Entertainment Software Association.

The state argued that the law focused on the state's compelling interest in curbing hostile and anti-social behavior among youths, including violence and aggression toward law enforcement officers.

The ban never took effect. Lasnik barred its implementation last summer until he had a chance to review its constitutionality.

Los Alamos stands down after lab security lapse

By LESLIE HOFFMAN

The Associated Press

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. — All classified work at Los Alamos National Laboratory has come to a halt while officials conduct a wall-to-wall inventory of sensitive data.

The unprecedented stand-down began on noon Thursday, and the inventory of CDs, floppy disks and other data storage devices is expected to be completed within days, lab spokesman Kevin Rourke said.

The stand-down comes after the lab reported last week that two items containing classified information turned up missing. The items were identified only as removable data storage devices.

It is the latest in a series of embarrassments that have prompted federal officials to put the Los Alamos management contract held by the University of California up for bid for the first time in the 61-year history of the lab.

The Energy Department has announced that Deputy Energy Secretary Kyle McLarlow and Linton Brooks, head of the National Nuclear Security Administration, will personally oversee

the probe into the latest security lapse.

Energy Secretary Spencer Abraham said he told McLarlow earlier this week to use "all available mechanisms" to find the missing items, including polygraphs.

Despite efforts to reduce the lab's inventory of removable data storage devices and re-vamp custodial policies for the material, officials said some employees are simply not following the rules.

"This is the third incident in about eight months. Part of me wants to say, 'Get rid of the damn labs,'" said Ward Connerly, university regent in San Francisco. However, he said he doesn't believe another institution could do the job as well.

Lab and university officials reiterated pledges to protect national security and said a culture change is needed at the lab.

"This behavior and these breaches of national security would not be tolerated," regents chairman Gerald Parsky said.

The university hasn't decided whether to compete for the management contract when it expires next year, although regents have told staff to prepare as though they will.

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IN THE WORLD



A relative carries the body of a boy, a victim of a fire at the Lord Krishna Middle School, outside the Kumbakonam General Hospital mortuary Friday in Kumbakonam, India. A fire at the school killed at least 84 students and wounded 100 more, officials said.

School fire in India kills 84, injures 100

BY M. LAKSHMAN
The Associated Press

KUMBAKONAM, India — As flames swept through their thatched-roof school, hundreds of children scrambled to escape Friday, clawing at concrete walls and falling over each other. Eighty-four children died and more than 100 were injured, officials said.

No teachers died, and a senior fire officer said it was because they abandoned the children and fled. But the district government administrator said it was too early to know, and he noted that some 700 children got out alive and likely were aided by teachers.

The fire started in a kitchen and jumped across the flammable roof of the three-story, private Lord Krishna Middle School, said J. Radhakrishnan, the administrator for the Thanjavur district, 1,300 miles south of New Delhi, India's capital.

He said that when the fire burst out at 11 a.m., the building was packed with 800 students — most ages 6 to 13 — in rooms shared by up to six classes at a time.

Afterward, local television showed dozens of small, blackened bodies with skeletal limbs piled two or three deep, covering the entire floor inside a large hall where they were laid out, burned beyond recognition, their clothes seared off of flaking skin.

More world stories on Page 23

More than 30 survived with burn injuries, but many of them died as the hours passed in the local government hospital, screaming in pain or lying unconscious in a large emergency ward. Doctors applied ointment on their scalded bodies. Nurses placed large banana leaves — believed to soothe the burning skin — under the injured or on their wounds.

Parents, many crying, waved hand-held bamboo and plastic fans despite the air conditioning to soothe the inflamed wounds. Hundreds more waited outside the hospital.

"As far as we can make out, the fire started in the kitchen of the school on the ground floor," Radhakrishnan told The Associated Press. "The sparks flying up would have set fire to the thatched roof on the first floor." The school's long, narrow, windowless classrooms each had only one exit, such as the 2,100-square-foot third-floor hall, where six classes were studying together because of a lack of space. The flames brought down the roof of bamboo logs and coconut leaves on the heads of children trapped inside.

Crash prompts autobahn closure

BERLIN — A transport truck crashed and burst into flames on Friday, forcing the closure of a stretch of a major highway near the northern German city of Braunschweig, police said.

The driver of a truck carrying rubber and other goods apparently lost control of his vehicle on the A2 autobahn toward Berlin, a major east-west link, Friday morning. The truck skidded along a guard rail, then crashed into a sound protection wall and burst into flames. The fire was so intense that the heat may have damaged a bridge next to the crash scene, and authorities said the highway would be closed at least through the weekend for inspections.

The truck driver and his passenger were seriously injured, but their injuries were not life-threatening, police said.

From The Associated Press

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Thanks for my life

I've been an employee of KBR for the last six months published in Balad, Iraq, as a truck driver, hauling ice to different bases all over the country.

On a night mission on June 29, our convoy was ambushed by a "daisy chain" of improvised explosive devices, rocket-propelled grenades and small-arms fire. The convoy consisted of about 20 vehicles of KBR and military vehicles, of which several were disabled. Four persons — three military personnel and 1 — were wounded. My vehicle was hit by an IED explosion on the front right side and shrapnel came through the passenger side window, tearing into my right arm and chest. I was bleeding all over the place, sending me into confusion and shock.

The next thing I remember is someone pulling me out of the truck, laying me on the ground and elevating my legs. Someone put an IV into my arm and kept pressing on my wounds.

As I was being treated, I heard the sound of small-arms fire, which I believe were our guys keeping the enemy off of us long enough to get the injured into a medevac helicopter, which was called and responded very quickly.

My purpose in writing is to thank the 1462nd Transportation Company attached to the 7th Transportation Battalion and their commander, Edward Corns, for the care they were so kind to provide for me. I cannot tell you enough how professional and courageous this Army National Guard unit from Howell, Mich., is and how bravely they reacted under an intense amount of pressure. These guys were so cool and calm during the whole ordeal, like it happens to them every day. It just made me relax and calm down and I knew I was in good hands with them around.

Thanks, guys!

A couple of days after the ordeal, they came by the hospital to check on me, and again I can't express what a great bunch of guys these are.

You guys are in my prayers and those of my wife every day.

Come home safe and come home soon, and I'll buy the beer. Just let me know

Tell us what you think

Stars and Stripes welcomes your comments on editorials and columns that are published in the newspaper, and values letters on topics of importance in the lives of our readers. All letters must be signed, and must include the writer's address or base and telephone number. We reserve the right to edit letters for length, taste and clarity.

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what airport you'll be coming into and I'll meet you there with a pickup-truck.

Craig T. Compton
 Hudson, Fla.

More on Moore

The senior airman who wrote "Making more money" (July 7) is so out of touch with the facts it is ridiculous.

How about starting with the beginning of the letter: "It is nice to see Michael Moore making money off the Sept. 11 tragedy." Are you making extra money for being over here? I know I am. I also know the reason why I'm making more money. It's because of the nature of the risk that is associated with doing a job over here. Have you stopped to realize the risk that is present when someone decides to rub the government the wrong way? Just ask Joseph C. Wilson, a former U.S. diplomat whose name has charged the Bush administration with changing the identity of his wife as a CIA covert operative, putting her in danger and possibly endangering her life. All because he questioned the pre-war intelligence on Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. The effort, and risk it takes to dig deep enough into the lying and stab-and-jab world of governmental cover-ups, should be rewarded.

About the writer's claims that the Democrats and Mike Moore will support anything that will get them a few more votes, last time I checked this is a two-party system, and logic states that there can only be a winner and a loser. Wouldn't it be realistic to say that those of one side will always enjoy the idea of the other team making a huge mistake that will increase their chances of winning? I've seen Moore back (former President) Clinton and the Democrats on more than a few occasions. So, next lame statement please.

Explain to me how Moore's making documentaries hurts the effort and the people who work over here. Why don't you ask the guys who go out in the streets every day, who are attacked time and time again? They are attacked not by the Iraqi WMD threat that was shovled down their throats last year, but by more terrorists.

Why is it they are getting attacked by terrorists and not the Iraqi threat? It is because of the choices you, I and the rest of the American public were led to believe. The administration may have a good reason now for people to get shot at (since the fast-talkers have turned the issues to "see how he treats his people," instead of "WMD") but the initial reason was exaggerated. When Moore uses his freedom of speech, it doesn't hurt my efforts to do my job. I would love to hear from you, specifically, on how he affects yours.

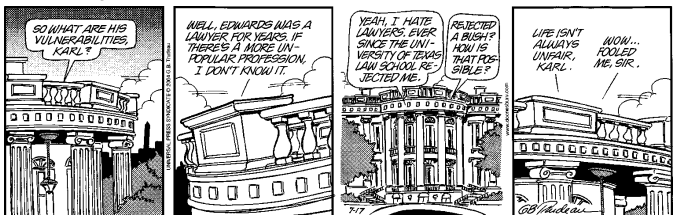
Finally I would like to say that end does not justify the means. Regardless of the end of this conflict, the means were wrong, and some could say impeachable. I remember when many Americans were calling for Clinton's impeachment over a mistake, not even comparable to what we've witnessed today. When are those same righteous Americans now, when an even larger mistake has been made? With such disregard for the facts and truth, these actions beg for the question, "If we were led to like this on this scale, must else could they be lying to us about?"

People — yes, even the writer — are entitled to their opinion, but people are not, however, entitled to their own facts.

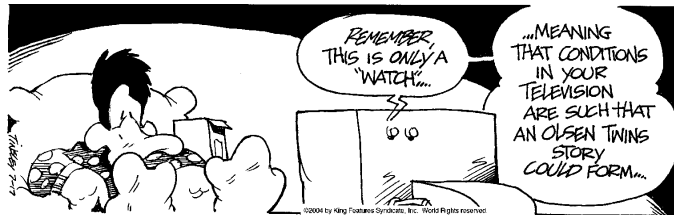
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BY GARRY TRUDEAU



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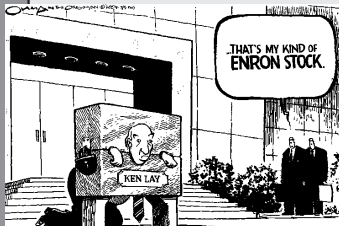
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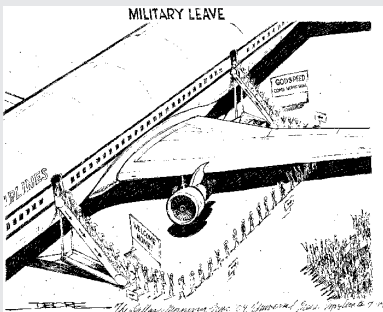
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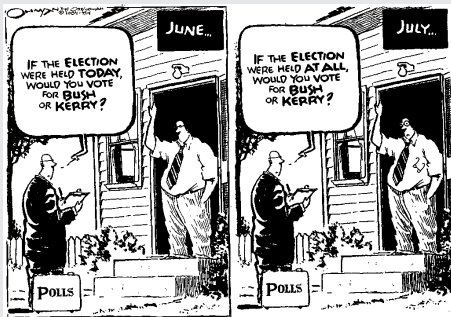
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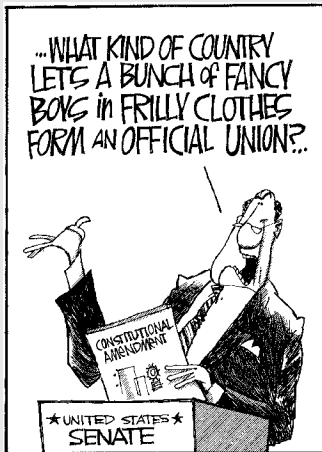
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Mysterious letter

CT BRIDGEPORT — Investigators are trying to trace the sender of a letter loaded with white powder that ended up at a state prosecutor's office. A secretary opened an envelope that contained the powder. Two years ago, a letter laden with white powder was mailed to the same office from a state prison inmate.

The latest powder letter was also came from a state prison.

More nurses-to-be

SC GREENVILLE — The University of South Carolina Update plans to double its nursing school enrollment in the next year. Chancellor John Stockwell said the school's nursing program will enroll up to 128 candidates each year. Stockwell said the university plans to build a \$24 million Health Education Complex on its Spartanburg campus.

The school changed its name last month from USC Spartanburg.

Murder charge

IL ELMHURST — Prosecutors said they charged a 38-year-old man with first-degree murder in the death of a high school student. They said Anson Paape shot the teen after he refused to play a version of Russian roulette. Paape allegedly loaded a revolver with a single bullet, spun the cylinder and fired at Michael Murray's forehead.

More food than ever

ND GRAND FORKS — The Grand Forks Air Force Base has a new, bigger grocery store. The \$10 million commissary replaced a 40-year-old store. Base officials say the new store will improve morale among airmen and their families. The 50,000-square-foot building was built with money from a 5 percent surcharge on groceries.

Terror fire course

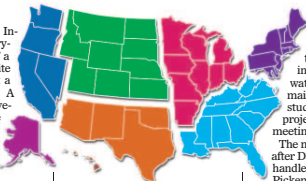
NV ELKO — The University of Nevada, Reno, Fire Service Academy has developed a specialized course in terrorism response that will offer to municipal firefighters across the nation beginning in September. The course is expected to bring over 700 firefighters to the academy over two years. The firefighters will attend the academy on scholarships under a \$2.5 million federal grant.

Lonely peacock

MA LEOMINSTER — A pining peacock living in a Leominster garage got no love from a neighbor, whose complaints spurred its owner to relocate the lonely bird in the interests of community relations.

Eunice Lloyd kept her 9-year-old peacock Boaz in her garage for six years, along with the bird's mate, a peahen named Ruth. Boaz's keening midnight cry, which lasts from mid-spring to midsummer, seemed a little louder this year, after Ruth died last winter.

A neighbor fed up with Boaz's cries complained about a month's ago, and City Councilor Richard



AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Marchand stepped in to try to resolve the situation. To keep the peace, Lloyd decided to give the bird to friends outside the city.

Cockfighting conviction

HI WAILUKU — A 61-year-old man has been convicted of racketeering, first-degree promotion of gambling and cruelty to animals in the first trial stemming from a yearlong undercover investigation into cockfighting operations on Maui.

William Dutro, of Wailuku, was among 35 people indicted in the investigation conducted in 2002. More than 20 are awaiting trial, while others have entered into plea agreements, prosecutors said.

Manlapao attended a series of cockfights between February and June 2002, observing who was participating actively and making bets. He testified that Dutro was observed weighing roosters before their participation in fights at events in Waikapu and Punahoa. Hupp said Dutro was the first to go to trial because at the time of the incident he was on parole on a firearms conviction.

Authorities plan wells

TX LUBBOCK — The main supplier of water to 11 communities in drought-prone West Texas wants to place hundreds of small wells along its pipeline between Amarillo and Lamesa over

the next 20 years.

The board of the Canadian River Municipal Water Authority, which has been looking for other sources of water as Lake Meredith remains low, approved a study of the proposed project Wednesday at a meeting in Sanford.

The move comes two months after Dallas oil tycoon Panhandle landowner T. Boone Pickens declined to sell the authority water rights he owns or controls on about 110,000 Panhandle acres, Satterwhite said.

The water authority supplies water to about 500,000 people, two-thirds of the population of the South Plains and the Panhandle.

Salmonella outbreak

PA PITTSBURGH — At least 34 cases of salmonella poisoning from a strain of the bacteria often found on fresh produce have been reported in western Pennsylvania since late last week, health officials said.

Investigators trying to track down the source of the outbreak are interviewing the victims about what and where they ate in recent days.

Richard McGarvey, spokesman for the state Health Department, said the infections were all caused by the same type of salmonella bacteria. But he said it is too early to connect the outbreak to a specific food supplier or other outlet.

Second fireworks death

FL MELBOURNE — A second man has died of injuries suffered when he and a friend accidentally set off a load of fireworks last month while they were driving.

Antonio Robinson, 27, died Tuesday evening at the hospital where he had been since the accident that burned him over 40 percent of his body, police said. Robinson and Artavis Walker, 23, were lighting fireworks and throwing them out their car's windows the night of June 28 when a cigarette fell into the back seat and set off the remaining fireworks.

Robinson, who was in the passenger seat, escaped the flaming vehicle a few blocks before it crashed into a light pole. Walker was burned over 90 percent of his body and died the next day.

Adviser cannot return

KS TOPEKA — A federal judge on Wednesday threw out a court order that allowed the adviser of the Kansas State University student newspaper to resume his duties after he was removed amid criticism of the paper's coverage.

U.S. District Judge Julie Robinson ruled there was insufficient evidence to grant Ron Johnson's request for a temporary injunction to prohibit Kansas State from reassigning him from the post he held for 15 years.

Johnson was removed in May after the newspaper was sharply criticized for failing to cover a regional conference on black student government that drew 1,000 people to campus in February.

Johnson sued the university, alleging the reassignment was an attempt to control the content of the Kansas State Collegian.



Ladies of liberty

Penny England, left, dressed as the Statue of Liberty, and Jessica Van Natta, dressed as Marie Antoinette, join the Bastille Day block party sponsored by Les Halles restaurant Wednesday in New York. Bastille Day marks the 1789 French revolution, when angry crowds stormed the Bastille Prison, which sparked the revolution that rid France of its monarchy.



Making a splash

Javon Daniels, right, a lifeguard at Jones Park, is soaked as he holds up Jasmine Mood of East St. Louis, Ill., into a steady flow of water at the park in East St. Louis on Tuesday. The National Weather Service issued a heat advisory as temperatures climbed into the high 90s.



Sunstruck

Wanda Ramondini, 74, top, stands on the roof of her house to measure the height of the sunflower plants while her husband, Ernie, 89, holds the other end of the measuring tape Monday in Merced, Calif. The plants measured 13 to 15 feet.



'V' is for victory Darin Jones, left, raises his arms in victory after beating his friend Clarence Kay in a game of backgammon Wednesday in Kay's front yard in Anderson, S.C.



Homecoming hugs U.S. Marine Corps Sgt. Andrew Mrozik, 28, of Chicago, receives emotional homecoming hugs from his daughters, Autumn, 8, and Dakota, 2, right, Tuesday at Camp Pendleton, Calif. Mrozik, an avionics technician assigned to the Pendleton-based Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 369, returned home after a seven-month deployment that took him to Iraq, Japan, Philippines, South Korea and Thailand.



Footloose and fancy-free Boys Fancy dancer Delano Cleveland, 5, competes in the Pow Wow Dance Contest at the Thunder Falls Pow Wow at Sag Malgie. Stadium last week in Niagara Falls, N.Y.

New airport plans

ME PORTLAND — Aviation officials plan to introduce new flight patterns and procedures at the Portland International Jetport. The changes stem from a three-year study that was prompted by complaints of booms and rumbles during take-off and landing.

Less license cheating

MS JACKSON — Nearly 60 percent of Mississippians applying for regular driver's licenses have failed the general knowledge test since the state switched to a computerized testing system in December. Officials say only 20 percent failed before the switch. Mississippi was one of 15 states last year to receive new automated testing services. The technology helps eliminate cheating.

Buckling up is good

IL CHICAGO — Illinois drivers are safer since a new seat belt law took effect, state transportation officials said. They cited 63 fewer automobile-accident fatalities from a year earlier. A law enacted in July 2003 allows police to stop motorists because the drivers' front-seat passengers or children in the back seat are not buckled. Four out of five Illinois drivers and passengers are wearing seat belts.

Pigeon deadline

UT PLEASANT GROVE — Gordon Smith reluctantly killed about 100 pedigree racing pigeons to comply with a city deadline.

The city gave him until the end of June to get rid of his birds. The Planning Commission revoked his permit for having more than the allowed 50 pigeons on his property. He said he didn't have enough time to sell the birds.

Former banker cashes in

AK ANCHORAGE — The board of trustees of the Alaska Permanent Fund voted to offer the job of managing the \$27.9 billion fund to a former banker. Michael Burns, 57, said he was inclined to accept the \$200,000-a-year position. The fund is a depository for some of the state's oil revenue and is invested mostly in stocks, bonds and real estate. Some of the profits pay annual dividends to Alaska residents.

Firefighters scrutinized

TX HOUSTON — Houston Fire Chief Phil Boriske says eight firefighters whose job applications have been questioned for possibly withholding damaging personal information remain on the job.

Boriske told the Houston Chronicle for a story in Friday's editions that information from Assistant Fire Chief Herbert Sims that the firefighters had been fired was incorrect.

Boriske said the eight were on active duty, but their futures with the department are subject to further review.

Boriske said one firefighter was terminated two months ago because of the investigation by the city's Inspector General's Office.

Fire Department officials said nine other employees whose files had been questioned were cleared of any wrongdoing.

A nine-month investigation is under way of the fire department's hiring and recruiting practices.

Missing no more

OH NEWARK — A girl reported missing in California nine years ago was found in Ohio, living under a different name with her mother, authorities said.

Prosecutors said a woman recognized the girl's picture from the Web site of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children and called sheriff's deputies.

The girl, Vanessa Brancheau, was 5 when she and her mother, Sheri Lyn Taylor, were reported missing in 1995 from the Los Angeles community of Woodland Hills, the county sheriff's office said in a news release.

Sheriff's Capt. Rod Mitchell said Thursday that Taylor indicated that she and her husband had been fighting for custody of the girl at the time of the disappearance.

No charges have been filed, and Mitchell said more investigating was needed.

Green Party gains

WA OLYMPIA — Green Party candidates for congressional and statewide offices will be on the November ballot, the Secretary of State's office confirmed. Four Green Party candidates are campaigning for statewide and congressional seats. Party candidates are also seeking county commissioner seats in two counties.

Sex with students

NH NASHUA — A former Milford Middle School teacher has been sent to prison for at least a decade for having sex with two 14-year-old girls.

Kevin Marquis, 36, tearfully apologized in court Tuesday after pleading guilty.

To the girls he had sex with and two others for whom he purchased alcohol and cigarettes, Marquis said, "It tears me apart that I hurt you. If I were to read that someone else hurt you, I would be furious."

Marquis said he has struggled to overcome a bipolar disorder for the past two years. Although he said that should excuse him, he maintained the disorder contributed to his behavior.

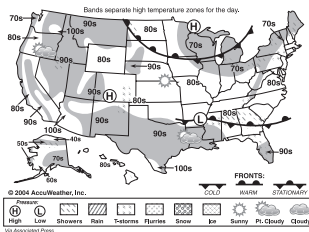
Bison hazing continues

MT HELENA — A federal appeals court on Wednesday upheld a judge's decision to dismiss a lawsuit environmental groups filed to stop the hazing of bison wandering from Yellowstone National Park.

A three-member panel of the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that U.S. District Judge Charles Lovell properly dismissed the suit in April 2003 because the groups had not proven their case against the federal agencies involved in the management of bison.

The groups had argued that efforts to haze or capture bison that leave the park were adversely affecting nearby nesting bald eagles, and that officials had not properly studied the effects on the protected birds.

Stories and photos from The Associated Press



STARS AND STRIPES.

FACES 'N' PLACES



KRT/COURTESY WALT DISNEY PICTURES

Jackie Chan does battle with an enemy in China in Walt Disney Pictures' "Around the World in 80 Days." The actor star says age is becoming a factor in his ability to do stunts.

Action star wants to shed his 'happy-go-lucky' image

BY JAYMES SONG

The Associated Press

HONOLULU

Jackie Chan is attempting his most daring stunt ever.

Chan wants to shed his happy-go-lucky, action star image to become a "real actor" who uses more dialogue and emotion than punches and kicks.

"I want to change. I want to be like Robert DeNiro. I want to be Dustin Hoffman," said the big-screen star from Hong Kong. "I don't always want to be like the old days. ... I want to change my image. I want to become an actor who can fight — not an action star."

Chan met with reporters in Hawaii while promoting his latest film, "Around the World in 80 Days," and to officially open his first U.S. restaurant, adding to the 40 he owns in Asia.

The biggest reason Chan wants his

image from an acrobatic, high-flying martial arts master to a serious, more subdued actor is age. Chan, famous for performing his own harrowing stunts, turned 50 in April.

"Even though I'm pretty good, how long can I keep fighting?" he said. "Look at Robert DeNiro. Look at Clint Eastwood. They still can act."

The film star said he will probably do his own stunts in action films "for another five years," but he wants more dramatic roles like those in movies such as 1979's "Kramer vs. Kramer," which featured Hoffman.

Chan recently attended a fund-raising screening of "Around the World in 80 Days," a reprise of the Jules Verne classic. The film was released by Disney.

"Around the World in 80 Days" has already generated a buzz, not necessarily for Chan's performance, but for the appearance of the action hero turned politician, Arnold Schwarzenegger, who plays the womanizing Prince Hapi.

"He's not that tough. He's a very nice guy," Chan said. "We talked a lot of jokes. Most of the time he was hiding in the corner playing chess."

The \$110 million film is the latest of Chan's Hollywood comedy-action films. "The Medallion," "Shanghai Knights" and "The Tuxedo" all brought in lackluster results at the U.S. box office.

Chan is also working on a new sequel to his popular "Police Story" drama series that helped him gain international fame. He plays a crime fighter in "New Police Story" dealing with gangsters and the death of his comrades.

The film, set to be released in Asia this fall, features several fight scenes and big explosions. It also gives Chan a chance to show his serious side, or what he calls being a "true actor."

"You can see it's a pure drama, but of course you have to have action. Otherwise I wouldn't have the international market,"

he said. "It's a heavy drama with action. There's no comedy."

Chan also will work on "The Myth," which he describes as an "Indiana Jones" type adventure, before starting work on "Rush Hour 3."

Hawaii is one of the spots being considered for filming the third in the popular "Rush Hour" series, competing with Thailand and Japan. Chan said he prefers Hawaii for its scenery, but co-star Chris Tucker would rather shoot in Asia.

From humble beginnings, Chan began his career trying to prove himself as an action star in Hong Kong. He became a huge star in Asia. Then he took on Hollywood.

"Right now, I have to prove I'm not action anymore," he said. "That's difficult because for all those years, for the big studios, everybody knows Jackie as an action star."

"I don't think they'll give me \$20 million to make 'Kramer vs. Kramer.' They don't want to take the risk," he said. "But they're willing to spend \$100 million to make 'Rush Hour 3' because this is a business."

Smith: Robots shouldn't look human

Will Smith figures robots will take over many domestic and mental tasks for humans.

He just doesn't expect them to look much like his humanoidlike machine co-stars in the new film "I, Robot."

Smith, 35, plays a detective in 2035 who suspects a robot has murdered the reclusive scientist responsible for technological innovations that have populated the world with machine servants vaguely resembling humans.

In real life, though, humans have a psychological barrier against ma-



Smith

chines that look like themselves, Smith said.

"Technology is heading away from that, because people don't respond well to human-looking robots, especially if they're over 4 feet," Smith told The Associated Press in an interview last week promoting "I, Robot," which opens Friday.

Nick and Jessica's family plan

Pop star couple Jessica Simpson and Nick Lachey want to go from "Newlyweds" to "Parenthood."

The married stars of the MTV reality series "Newlyweds: Nick & Jessica" tell Us Weekly magazine they plan to start a family in the not-too-distant future.

"I don't think it will be in six months or a year, but after that, Nick's getting old," the 24-year-old Simpson told the



Nick and Jessica

magazine.

The 30-year-old Lachey told Us at a Big Brothers Big Sisters event in New York City. "We'd love to have our own children, but we have a heart for kids, and we'd love to adopt."

The couple are considering adopting a teenage child from an underdeveloped country.

As a teen, Simpson and her family regularly visited an orphanage in Mexico.

However, cameras likely won't be invited into family life. The couple say this may be the last season for their MTV show.

From The Associated Press

Horoscope

The new moon in Cancer is like the emotional equivalent of moving into a new home. Just as all of your belongings must be accounted for and placed in their new surroundings, your new feelings must be recognized and put in their proper perspective. It's exciting when you can go forward in relationships without carrying the old baggage.

TODAY'S HORIZON (July 17)

It's a year of expectations surpassed, so set your sights high! Always have a Plan A as well as a Plan B, and you'll succeed where others have failed. Finances are improved when you put your heart into your work. You'll need to rack up extra hours in September. Couples go on an exotic trip in December. Sagittarius or Aquarius love is favored.

ARIES (March 21-April 19)

There are numerous prospects in your realm today. Part of being creatively aware is being able to recognize opportunity when it shows itself. You'll make a great discovery while looking for something entirely unrelated.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

Sometimes, you notice what's wrong without giving credit to what is right. Don't make this mistake today, though, as there are many sensitive souls who will take issue with your approach. This afternoon features a political game.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21)

You know what you want, but there may be an unconscious goal that is conflicting with your larger aim. The more honest you are, the more chance you have of eliminating all things in opposition to your goal.

CANCER (June 22-July 22)

Reflecting on past mistakes and glories helps you make solid career decisions. Make contact with people from your past. It may not be awkward — in fact, you'll be received with open arms by long-lost friends and sweeties.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22) Change is gradual, as much as you'd like it to be sweeping. Just as it's difficult to recognize the growth of a child

you see every day, you may not notice differences in yourself. Blessing.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

There's not an area of your life that couldn't use the "less is more" strategy now. Friendships grow tighter when you don't try too hard. You're romantically more alluring and more in demand at work, too.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23)

Do anything you can think of to simplify your life. The more straightforward your activities are, the more time you'll have to pursue what you really enjoy.

Tonight, you could become enamored of someone strong and able.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21)

Listen to what you're thinking about when you're seemingly not thinking about anything at all. It is in those in-between spaces that your wishes and desires live. Tune in, and write them down.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

You're feeling the pain of the world. Everywhere you look, you are getting evidence of the frailty of the human condition. Try to also see the strength humans possess.

We've survived this long, right?

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

While attempting to concentrate on your own business, you'll be distracted, coerced and diverted by truly annoying people. Minimize the time you spend caught up in matters you're really not willing to do anything about.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

Try many options until you find the one you are most passionate about. The fire in your belly will give you clarity of purpose, without which all actions are merely reactions.

Don't be sucked in by the promise of a quick buck.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

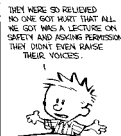
Your time is so valuable, you'll have to say "no" several times before noon in order to safeguard it! The vampires are out! Romance is going well now that a certain truth is in the open. You feel more able to be yourself.

Creators Syndicate



Joyce Jillson

Calvin and Hobbes



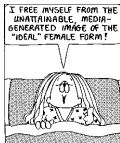
Jump Start



Zits



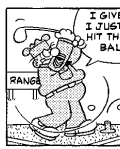
Cathy



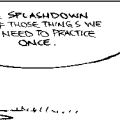
Hi and Lois



Beetle Bailey



Red Rover



Better or Worse



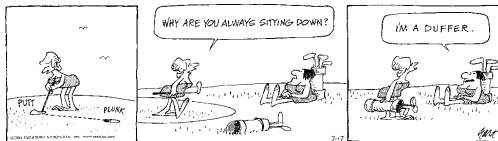
Peanuts



Fotrot



B.C.



Baby Blues



Spider Man



Blondie



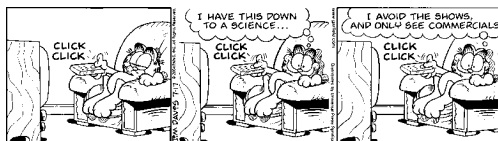
Dilbert



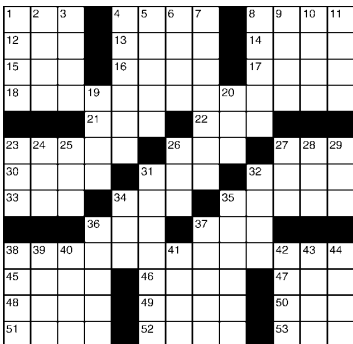
Hagar



Garfield



Eugene Sheffer Crossword



Across

- 1 Bishop's
- 2 Caviar provider
- 4 "M*A*S*H" cast member
- 8 Coppola kin
- 12 Lead-in to "2, 3, 4"
- 13 Skin soother
- 14 Somewhere out there
- 15 Bush ex-spokesman
- 16 "Voom" precursor
- 17 Advanced math
- 18 Tabloid pic, maybe
- 21 Branch
- 22 Aloof
- 23 Pictorial poser
- 26 Gaffer Ernie
- 27 Gossett or Gehrig
- 30 Leave out
- 31 Happiness
- 32 Acknowledges
- 33 However
- 34 "—Tiki!"
- 35 It can arouse a GI
- 36 Reaction to fireworks
- 37 Many mongrel
- 38 Sipping
- 45 Historic periods
- 46 Acted the stoolie
- 47 Swindle
- 48 Hindu royal
- 49 Wind instrument
- 50 Latin 101 word
- 51 Shoppe description

Down

- 1 Caviar provider
- 2 Coin of
- 3 Grand-scale tale
- 4 Shows a preference for
- 5 Civilian's
- 6 35-Across?
- 7 Wander about
- 8 Guisewrite comic strip
- 9 Circular haidro
- 10 Pace
- 11 Therefore
- 12 Lacking scale
- 20 IBM products
- 23 Plagiarize
- 24 Striker's kin
- 25 Morsel
- 26 Lo-o-o-ng time
- 27 Journal
- 28 Night flier
- 29 Work with
- 31 Part of LBJ
- 32 "Ironside" star
- 34 Japanese pond fish
- 35 Moved slightly
- 36 Actor Davis
- 37 Hiawatha's transport
- 38 Nephew of Caligula
- 39 Caspian feeder
- 40 Mickalby partner
- 41 Kotter portrayal
- 42 "— Help"
- 43 Idditaro terminus
- 44 Recognize

Answer to Previous Puzzle



7-17 CRYPTOQUIP

LFE PVLEKLW EF GVJJ
FGG EAS QSVU, EAS
WMULVHE VJPMH SVEH

V PSJJ-QVJVLDSZ ZKSE.
Yesterday's Cryptquip: WHEN TWO REAL ESTATE AGENTS GREET EACH OTHER, THEY COULD SAY "HOUSE IT GOING!"
Today's Cryptquip Clue: J equals L

Monsoon-season death toll above 400 in South Asia

BY FARID HOSSAIN
The Associated Press

DHAKA, Bangladesh — Monsoon floods continued to wreak havoc across India, Bangladesh and Nepal, submerging more villages while pushing the death toll higher with possibly three more months of annual rains to go, officials said Friday.

About 400 people in South Asia have died since the monsoon started last month, with new deaths reported in Bangladesh and Nepal on Friday, according to official tallies and news reports. Last year, monsoon flooding in the region killed 1,500 people from mid-June to mid-October.

In Bangladesh, 15 people — including eight children — drowned in flood waters on Thursday, raising the death toll there to 83, the Sangbad and Bangladesh Observer daily reported.

About 15,000 people fled for

higher ground after the Padma River burst through an embankment Thursday in western Bangladesh, inundating 15 villages, relief officials said.

The Jamuna River surged through another mud embankment in the northern region, meanwhile, leaving about 15,000 people stranded, the officials said on condition of anonymity.

Floods caused by heavy rains have engulfed nearly half of Bangladesh, leaving more than 5 million people marooned in their houses, or huddled on embankments or in boats.

In India, 235 people have perished in landslides, building collapses, or from waterborne disease. Many others have drowned or been electrocuted since the monsoon began. No new deaths were reported in India on Friday, although weather officials predicted heavy rains in Bihar, Assam and other eastern states, where most flood-related deaths have occurred.



AP

Flood-affected villagers huddle in a boat as they try to move to safer areas Friday in the eastern Indian state of Bihar. The death toll in South Asia due to monsoon floods has risen to 400, and millions have been left stranded.

In Nepal, fresh rainfall was making it difficult for rescuers to reach areas hit by landslides and flooding, as the Himalayan kingdom's death toll increased to 77 on Friday, officials said.

Rescue helicopters with food, medicine and tents were grounded by deteriorating weather in the capital, Kathmandu, said Home Ministry spokesman Gopendra Pandey.



War Is Tough on Families

Military life has enough challenges without worrying about how your loved ones will contact you... especially during times of conflict. I know, because I grew up in a military family and served as a Navy Admiral.

You can count on the American Red Cross to help you wherever you go. Whether you're at sea, or on an installation, we can help your loved ones back home get messages to you, or from you, in case of emergency. We can also help you through counseling and other needed assistance.

The Red Cross was there for my family, and we'll be there for yours. In fact, we support thousands of military families each year.

For more information, or to learn how you can help, please contact your local Red Cross or visit www.redcross.org. Thank you.

Marsha Evans
President and CEO, American Red Cross
Rear Admiral, U.S. Navy (Ret.)



A special coast guard officer patrols at the main port of Piraeus, near Athens, in May. In addition to the \$1.2 billion Greece will spend on security, NATO said Friday that its entire Mediterranean naval fleet will be assigned to Olympics security.

AP

NATO ships on board to aid Olympics

The Associated Press

PIRAEUS, Greece — NATO's entire Mediterranean naval fleet will be assigned to protect the Olympics as part of the alliance's unprecedented role in bolstering security for the games, the flotilla's commander said Friday.

Rear Adm. Hans Jochen Wittthauer of Germany said all vessels under his command will work alongside Greek maritime forces to monitor the seas during the Aug. 13-29 Games.

The Standing Naval Force Mediterranean, based in Naples, Italy, includes more than a dozen frigates, destroyers and other vessels.

NATO also plans to conduct surveillance flights over Greece, which asked for help from its NATO allies to expand its Olympic security.

But Wittthauer noted that full monitoring of Greece's vast coastline and hundreds of islands "will be a challenge."

"Every little fishing boat can easily pick somebody up and can more easily sneak up on a boat," he said.

NATO will operate outside Greek territorial waters. He refused to give greater details of NATO's naval duties during the Olympics.

But the force has been involved

in anti-terrorism patrols throughout the eastern Mediterranean since shortly after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks in New York and Washington.

Maritime protection has taken a prominent role in Greece's \$1.2 billion security network.

Greece is a major destination along illegal smuggling routes for immigrants and goods. Also, Olympic dignitaries, heads of state and others are expected to stay aboard at least eight cruise ships in the port of Piraeus.

Some global security analysts predict that terrorist groups could be studying attacks on shipping lanes and other targets at sea.



American Red Cross

Together, we can save a life

Patient's penis allegedly cut off

BUCHAREST, Romania — Medical authorities are investigating a Romanian doctor after he allegedly cut off a patient's penis accidentally during testicle surgery, officials said Friday.

Mircea Cinteza, chairman of Romania's Doctors College, said colleagues would meet Friday to decide whether the unidentified urologist is guilty of malpractice.

The patient's penis was severed during an operation at a Bucharest hospital on Tuesday.

Ioan Lascar, a plastic surgeon who performed an operation on the man Thursday to help him urinate, said the patient was in stable condition.

Lascar said the 34-year-old man would undergo reconstruction surgery in the coming months but the chances of success are unknown.

From The Associated Press

Even with Bryant, Lakers are shaky

By MARK WHICKER

The Orange County (Calif.) Register

EL SEGUNDO, Calif. — Back when the two could stand to be in the same city with each other, Kobe Bryant admirably gave Shaquille O'Neal his own hip-hop nickname: Wilt Chambernezy.

On Thursday, Bryant sat in a quiet practice gym and insisted that his own nickname shouldn't be Mack E. Oveili.

First, though, The Prince signed a contract for seven years and \$136.4 million to become the central nervous system for the Los Angeles Lakers, such as they are.

At the very least he is finally the master of his basketball unit. The Lakers belong to Bryant more exclusively than most NBA teams have belonged to anyone.

But it was important to Bryant to convince the city that he was a mere bystander to the Lakers' great unraveling, a stance that was bringing laughter from Montana to Miami.

"Shaquille (O'Neal) had to make a decision to take care of his family," Bryant said. "Dr. Jerry Buss and Phil (Jackson) had some disagreements. I wish both of them well in their lives."

"Ultimately I wanted to come back with Phil and Shaquille and play for another championship. We had some great years together. I've been here eight years and we've played for the title four times. Shaq and I played well together. We had our disagreements and arguments but I told the Lakers that I wanted to keep playing with Shaquille. In a perfect world, we'd all be back together."

Commentary

How did we suffer the misconception that Bryant arranged this? Silly question.

"It was you guys (media), doing what you do best," Bryant said. "I didn't laugh (at the speculation). It angers me, it upsets me, it hurts me. I had nothing to do with it."

Truthfully, Bryant would not be the first Laker to get his coach fired. Ask Paul Westhead about Magic Johnson. Ask Pat Riley about the coup plotters in 1990, after the Lakers were bounced by Phoenix. It also happened to Butch Van Breda Kolff at the hands of Wilt Chamberlain.

Someone reminded Bryant that Jackson recently said the championships weren't enough for Kobe. "Yeah, I saw that," Bryant said, shaking his head. "I couldn't believe that. The championships are what I play for."

Then he admitted that he might not be playing for another championship very soon.

"It'll be an uphill battle," he said. "We're not even close to what we were. We just lost the most dominant force in the game. Dr. Buss has changed the direction of the team. We, as soldiers, have to do our part."

Then, amusingly, Bryant described himself as "just a piece in the puzzle."

Sitting beside Bryant during this exercise in aerobic semantics was Mitch Kupchak, the aging general manager.

"I felt it should have been an easy decision," Kupchak said. "Especially considering all the Lakers had to offer."



His seven-year contract and Shaquille O'Neal's departure leave Kobe Bryant, above, in charge of the depleted Los Angeles Lakers.

He meant more years and more money than anyone else could bring.

Yet it says quite a bit about Bryant and the quality of the Kupchak, who has known Bryant all these years, had no idea what would happen.

For all the pretty things he said about his heart belonging to the Lakers, the fact is that Bryant kept Kupchak hanging while he considered playing for the Clippers, the Lakers' fellow tenants and their bipolar opposites. Nothing would have been more embarrassing for the premier franchise in basketball.

"Finally Kobe said he was going to sign. It was a feeling of joy. I do know that if he had not signed, it wouldn't have been a good day in Laker history," Kupchak said.

That's because Derek Fisher signed with Golden State for \$37 million. Fisher leaves, regrettably, as a footnote, when in reality he was one of the great playmaking weapons in Lakers history — and his 4.0 earthquake shot in San Antonio would have been known as the all-time Lakers moment if the club had gone ahead and won the

championship. One way the Pistons beat the Lakers was by never leaving Fisher.

"He'll always be a Laker in our minds," Kupchak said.

Just who is a Laker now?

Well, there's Gary Payton at point.

Bryant, Lamar Odom, Luke Walton and Caron Butler are on the perimeter.

Brian Grant and several staffs to be named later will play center.

If Karl Malone doesn't join that list, the Lakers will have to hustle to even make the playoffs in a conference that was good anyway, and now features Tracy McGrady, Carlos Boozer and Kenyon Martin.

All in all, it was a typically contradictory day for Bryant, a guy who has shown little inclination to play for his country but who showed up Thursday in a USA warmup suit.

The Lakers' summer of all fears is not over. Bryant's rhetoric on Thursday was ultimately insignificant. It doesn't weaken who we believe. The Prince has a dozen citizens of Colorado to persuade.

Incidentally, that piece of the puzzle keeps getting lost.

Agent says G Fisher signs with Warriors

The Associated Press

OAKLAND, Calif. — Point guard Derek Fisher has agreed to a six-year, \$37 million contract with the Golden State Warriors, his agent, Mark Bartelstein, said Thursday.

A Warriors spokesman said the deal hadn't been finalized.

Fisher spent eight seasons with the Los Angeles Lakers, who drafted him out of Arkansas-Little Rock in 1996. The Lakers won three championships with Fisher as a primary ballhandler for Shaquille O'Neal and Kobe Bryant, but when Los Angeles signed Gary Payton last season, Fisher was released to the bench.

Fisher averaged just 7.1 points and 2.3 assists last season as Payton's backup, but didn't complain about his diminished role. In Game 5 of the second round of the playoffs, Fisher made one of the greatest shots in the Lakers' storied playoff history — an 18-foot jumper to beat the Celtics, who turned 30 next month, would have made just \$3 million in Los Angeles in each of the next two seasons.

A day after Payton exercised his \$5.4 million option for next season on June 22, Fisher opted on the final two years of his deal with the Warriors, who turns 30 next month, would have made just \$3 million in Los Angeles in each of the next two seasons.

Fisher will join a crowded backcourt in Golden State, with Speedy Claxton and Nick Van Exel also on the roster. But Van Exel and Claxton both spent significant portions of last season on the injured list, and forward Mike Dunleavy was forced to play point guard in the final weeks of the season.

In other signings: Manu Ginobili, the best player out of Argentina, re-signed with San Antonio, which also signed free agent guard Brent Barry. Ginobili's deal reportedly was for six years and \$52 million, while Barry's four-year deal was valued at between \$22 million and \$24 million.

Stephen Jackson will spend the next six years in Indianapolis after signing a contract worth between \$38 million and \$44 million.

He was acquired by the Pacers from Atlanta for forward Al Harrington.

Harrington told Pacers president Larry Bird he would rather be traded than come off the bench again.

Memphis gave Shane Battier a six-year contract extension, with no terms announced. The forward averaged 8.5 points and 3.8 rebounds in 79 games last season and is seen as a team leader.

"His attributes both on and off the court epitomize what we as an organization value and look for in our players," said Los Angeles President Jerry West said in a statement.

Martin traded to Nuggets for three first-round picks

By JOHN MARSHALL

The Associated Press

DENVER — Carmelo Anthony helped the Denver Nuggets reach the playoffs for the first time in nine years.

They hope Kenyon Martin can help them take the next step.

Denver acquired Martin in a sign-and-trade deal with New Jersey on Thursday, sending the future first-round draft picks to the Nets for the All-Star forward.

The deal, a result of several days of on-again, off-again talks between the teams, was completed after Martin agreed to a seven-year contract with the Nets.

"Any time you have a chance to add a player of the stature of Kenyon Martin, somebody who has been to the finals, who has been an All-Star, who plays with the ferocity that he plays with, that is an opportunity you really can't pass up," Nuggets General Manager Kiki Vandeweghe said. "We are, very, very lucky to have



The New Jersey Nets felt that signing Kenyon Martin to a big contract would have hindered their ability to remain a contender in the Eastern Conference.

been in a position to take advantage of his being available."

New Jersey was expected to make any offers on Martin, a restricted free agent, but the Nuggets were set to offer him a front-loaded contract with a hefty signing bonus that would have made him the highest paid rookie for incoming Nets owner Bruce Ratner.

New Jersey will pick one of Denver's first-rounders, along with picks that once belonged to the Los Angeles Clippers and Philadelphia.

"I felt that the magnitude of the contract, both in its first year due to the signing bonus as well as over its duration, would seriously impair our ability to sign enough quality players," Nets President Rod Thorn said.

The Nuggets have been stockpiling draft picks in Vandeweghe's three seasons as GM, adding to that stash by trading St. Joseph's guard James Nelson, the team's first-round pick this year. The deal with Orlando gave Denver potentially five first-round draft picks in the next three seasons and cleared about \$23 million in salary cap space.

The Nuggets had been stinging with their draft picks in the past, but the chance to pick up Martin was too good to pass up.

The overall No. 1 pick of the 2004 draft, Martin averaged 16.7 points and 9.5 rebounds last season. He is known as one of

league's best defensive forwards and is a strong finisher on the block, which should fit in well with Denver's uptempo style.

"We view Kenyon as a difference maker," Vandeweghe said. "Martin will be hard to replace and New Jersey has little depth at power forward. Third-year forward Brian Scalabrine and veteran Aaron Williams are the most likely candidates to start on Martin's spot after Rodney Rogers became a free agent."

After reaching the conference finals in consecutive seasons, the Nets were knocked out in seven games in a second-round series this year by Detroit.

Martin will be hard to replace and New Jersey has little depth at power forward. Third-year forward Brian Scalabrine and veteran Aaron Williams are the most likely candidates to start on Martin's spot after Rodney Rogers became a free agent.

"This was an extremely difficult decision for our franchise," Thorn said. "This core group of players has had an amazing run over the past few years, and we will work diligently toward one again competing for an NBA title."



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Jones relishes long jump win, Athens berth

BY BOB BAUM

The Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — Finally, a moment of triumph for Marion Jones in the U.S. Olympic track and field trials.

Cheered on by a warm, supportive crowd, Jones won the long jump at 23 feet, 4 inches — the second-longest mark in the world this year and her best effort since the 1998 World Cup final in Moscow.

"The first four steps were just as you drew them up," coach Dan Pfaff said. "She kept her rhythm all the way down the board. It's like a golf shot. She timed it perfectly."

Through the competition, Jones' trademark smile was nowhere to be found. She was expressionless, except for a nod toward the officials after her second and best jump of the night.

Embittered by the cloud of suspicion that she has endured all season, despite her vehement denials that she has ever taken performance-enhancing drugs, Jones again declined to talk to reporters.

But after her final jump, she flashed that smile and bowed to the crowd. Then she hugged runner-up Grace Upshaw and waved to the cheering fans.

On the victory stand, after the medal was placed around her neck, a bit of the old Marion Jones broke through.

"I think I had just a little bit of motivation," she said, laughing so hard her body bent forward. "It's really good. I had fun out there."

Then she gave a hint of the emotional lull she had been carrying after failing to make the team in the 100 meters, then finishing an unimpressive seventh in the long jump qualifying.

"So many people told me, 'Marion have fun,'" she told the crowd. "It was very hard to keep it together today," she said, her voice cracking as she began to sob.

The crowd at Hornet Stadium cheered. She gave high-fives and posed for a few pictures with fans as she made her way out a side entrance, avoiding the post-competition news conference that every other event winner has attended through the meet.

Jones, the long jump bronze medalist in the Sydney Olympics, sent word that she might talk with reporters after she competes in the 200 this weekend.

Later, Jones issued a statement through USA Track & Field.

"I'm very happy with my performance tonight," the statement said. "I'm excited about making my second Olympic team, and look forward to going to Athens."

On the track, the parade of young talent produced another champion, 20-year-old Jeremy Wariner of Baylor in the 400 with a personal-best 57.37, the fastest time in the world this year.

Warner and fourth-place finisher Darold Williamson are coached by Baylor's Clyde Hart, who also coached Olympic great Michael Johnson.

"It was time for us to show what collegiate athletes could do on a big stage," Warner said.

In an odd women's 3,000 steeplechase — an event not contested in the Olympics — Ann Gaffigan won in an American-record 9:39.35.

Brianna Shoosh finished ahead of Gaffigan, but she was disqualified for running around the first water jump, instead of over it.

Dan Lincoln, competing on the track



Marion Jones won the U.S. long jump title with a leap of 23 feet, 4 inches, the second-longest mark in the world this year, to earn a spot on the U.S. Olympic team.

where he was a double-winner for Arkansas in the 2003 NCAA championships, won the 3,000 steeplechase in a personal-best 8:15.02.

Erin Gilreath won the women's hammer throw at 231 feet.

Jacobs retires amid doping allegations

The Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — Regina Jacobs, whose long and remarkably successful middle-distance running career ended in disgrace when she dunked a steroid test, formally announced her retirement Thursday.

The announcement, in a statement released by her lawyer, came a day before Jacobs planned to begin a bid for her 13th national title in the 1,500 meters and three days before an arbitration hearing is scheduled in her doping case. Jacobs tested positive for the steroid THG at last year's U.S. championships, at which she won her 12th national title in the 1,500 — her ninth in the last 10 years. Jacobs is the fifth athlete involved in a doping case to either drop out of the Olympic trials or fail to qualify for the U.S. team for the Athens Games.

Tim Montgomery, Chryste Gaines and Alvin Harrison, all of whom have been charged with steroid use by the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency and face lifetime bans if found guilty by arbitrators, failed to qualify in the Olympic trials.

Michelle Collins, also charged by USADA with steroid use, pulled out of the women's 400 claiming a hamstring injury.

Adam Webb easily advanced through the first round of the 1,500 meters, winning his heat in 3:47.10. Year-old collegiate rivals Sanya Richards, DeeDee Trotter and Monique Henderson had the three fastest times in the semifinals of the women's 400.

Edwards: Stimulant use was inadvertent

BY BOB BAUM

The Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — Sprinter Torri Edwards, an outspoken supporter of U.S. anti-drug efforts in track and field, is the latest athlete to face a possible suspension for testing positive for a banned substance.

In an interview on Thursday with representatives of six news organizations, including The Associated Press, Edwards attributed the positive test on a glucose supplement that, unbeknownst to her, contained the stimulant as an additive.

She said she took the glucose because she wasn't feeling well. Edwards earned an Olympic berth with a second-place finish in the women's 100 meters at the U.S. Olympic track and field trials, but could be bounced from the team.

The reigning world champion at 100 meters, Edwards tested positive for the stimulant nikkethamide at a meet in Fort-de-France, Martinique, on April 24. The International Amateur Athletic Federation announced Thursday.

"I've never taken any performance-enhancing drugs. I never will. Never had a steroid," she said. "It's been five long, hard years for me to get to the point

where I am today and I would not do anything like this to jeopardize what I've earned over the years."

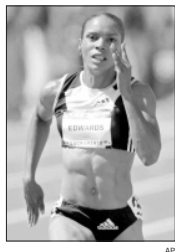
Edwards' case will be heard Monday by a U.S. arbitration panel in Orange County. Under the World Anti-Doping Agency code, she would face a 2-year ban unless she can persuade the panel that there were sufficient mitigating circumstances to warrant only a warning, said WADA spokesman Frederic Donze.

If the panel rules against her, Edwards said, she would take her case to the international Court of Arbitration for Sport. The CAS finding would be binding.

The glucose was supplied to her by Dr. Christopher Vincent, who purchased it at a local store, Edwards said, adding the container and remainder of the glucose has been presented as evidence in her case.

The substance known as "Coramine Glucose" is sold only in Vietnam and parts of France, according to a statement released by Edwards' agent, Emanuel Hudson.

Edwards and Lewis said there was no need for her to use any performance-enhancing drugs at Martinique because there were no top runners in the race, she had already received an appearance fee and there was no prize



American sprinter Torri Edwards faces suspension after testing positive for a banned stimulant.

money at stake. She said she felt obligated to run because she was the promotional attraction for the meet and took glucose after the first round of the 100.

Vincent, a British chiropractor, found the glucose at a local store, Edwards said. She said that neither cocaine nor nikethamide were on the wallet cards of banned substances both she and Vincent carried.

Edwards, who finished second to LaTasha Colander in the 100 final last Saturday, is scheduled to run the 200, with preliminaries beginning Friday.

"Now I go and get ready for the 200," she said, "and then get ready for my hearing on Monday — and get prepared for a fight."

Wilson, Young make men's gymnastics team

BY NANCY ARMOUR

The Associated Press

When Blaine Wilson dropped off the still rings in February, grabbing his torn left biceps, everybody thought his chances for the Athens Olympics were finished.

Everybody, that is, except Wilson.

He made good on the vow he made in February on Thursday night, earning one of the final two spots on the U.S. men's gymnastics team. When the men's gymnastics competition begins in Athens on Aug. 13, Wilson will be there — less than six months after his injury.

"I knew right away that I'd be back," he said. "Anyone who never out of my mind. It was never a question whether I'd be back. I just needed a little time to get everything together."

Guard Young also won a spot after a two-day selection meet in Colorado Springs, Colo., completing the team that already included current world and national champion Paul Hamm and twin brother Morgan, Brett McClure and Jason Gatson. The Hamm, McClure and Gatson were chosen at the Olympic trials last month.

Raj Bhavsar and 2000 Olympic champion Sean Townsend were selected as alternates. Sean Townsend, a

former national champion, 2000 Olympian and the world champion on parallel bars in 2001, didn't make the team.

The entire women's team will be chosen Sunday.

Wilson, who turns 30 on Aug. 3, has been the country's pre-eminent gymnast for a decade, winning five straight national titles from 1996-2000 and competing at the 1996 and 2000 Olympics.

He has never won an Olympic medal, though, a gaping hole that's kept him competing long after his peers retired.

He won his first world championship medal last summer when he helped the U.S. men take the silver, and figured to be part of the squad for Athens, where the Americans will be favored to win their first team medal since 1984.

Then came the American upset on Feb. 28. Wilson was competing on still rings, his best event, when he suddenly dropped to the mat, clutching his left arm. His biceps had torn, and four months later, a devastating injury that normally has a recovery time of 6-to-7 months.

After surgery March 2, Wilson immediately began rehabbing, riding a stationary bike and doing exercises to maintain his core strength. He was back in the gym six weeks and four months after the injury, competed at the Olympic trials.

Air Force players face court-martial

The Associated Press

AIR FORCE ACADEMY, Colo. — Two Air Force Academy football players accused of using steroids will be court-martialed, the military said.

Junior running back Matthew Ward, charged with wrongful use and possession of the anabolic steroid methandrostenolone, will be court-martialed Aug. 18, the academy said Thursday.

A date has not been set for the court-martial for junior linebacker Overton Spence Jr. on charges of wrongful use, distribution and possession of methandrostenolone.

Academy Superintendent Lt. Gen. John Rosa Jr. referred both cases to courts-martial earlier this week. Both cadets had waived their right to an Article 32 evidentiary hearing, which is similar to civilian grand jury sessions.

"After (Rosa) reviewed the evidence in the case and consulted with the Air Force judge advocate, he decided there was enough evidence to take the case forward," academy spokesman Lt. Col. Laurent Fox said.

If convicted, Ward faces 10 years of confinement while Spence could receive 25 years. Both face dismissal from the Air Force and forfeiture of pay and allowances. The school has begun random testing of cadets and some employees for steroids in what experts say is an unusual step for a college of any kind. Both players have been suspended from the football team.

"This is a military justice proceeding,

and we'll deal with whatever the outcome is when it's complete," coach Fisher DeBerry said. "I hurt for our guys that they are going through this, and I'm disappointed about it."

Military lawyers representing the cadets did not return phone calls.

Two other cadets also face steroids charges. An evidence hearing for Eric Swartz is scheduled for July 28. Rosa is deciding whether a court-martial is in order for Jonathan Belkowitz.

Earlier this week, senior cadet Shane Thomas was convicted of wrongful use and possession of ketamine, an anesthetic for humans and animals. He was also convicted of threatening to hurt a female cadet if she reported his drug use. He faces dismissal from the Air Force but no jail time.

NHL players union to resume talks

NEW YORK — NHL and players union negotiators will meet Wednesday, the first time they will have talked since May 25.

The NHL's collective bargaining agreement with the NHLPA expires Sept. 15.

"We remain hopeful that our meeting next Wednesday will result in progress being made toward a resolution," said NHL vice president Bill Daly. "Either way, we believe it is now important to begin meeting more regularly because time is getting short, and the only way this can be resolved is if the parties continue to talk."

The league is expected to lock out the players if a new contract is not reached in September. NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman has urged "cost certainty" for the owners

and is seeking some form of salary cap, which the union vehemently opposes.

Bettman and Bob Goodenow, executive director of the NHLPA, will attend Wednesday's meeting.

Blue Jays want Delgado to waive no-trade clause

TORONTO — The Toronto Blue Jays plan to ask slugger Carlos Delgado to waive his no-trade clause.

"I'm going to him ask if he wants to, but he has the right to decide whether he wants to or he doesn't," Blue Jays General Manager J.P. Ricciardi said Friday.

Delgado, eligible for free agency this fall, earns \$18.5 million this season in the final year of a four-year, \$64 million deal.

Ricciardi said the team will probably have a payroll of \$50 million next season, the same as this season. He would like to use the money Delgado makes on a number of players.

"I think Carlos understands it," Ricciardi said. "He's a very, very bright guy. Bringing him back at \$18.5 million dollars is something that's not going to happen. That doesn't mean we don't want to bring him back."

Ricciardi declined to say when he would speak to Delgado.

Delgado was second in AL MVP voting last year after hitting .302 with 42 homers and a major league-leading 145 RBIs.

He entered Friday night's game against Texas hitting .223 with 10 home runs and 33 RBIs. Delgado was activated from the disabled list on July 6 after missing 33 games with a strained rib cage.

Danton pleads guilty in plot to kill agent

The Associated Press

EAST ST. LOUIS, Ill. — Former St. Louis Blues player Mike Danton admitted Friday that he sought to have his agent killed as part of a plot that unraveled when the would-be hit man turned out to be a police informant.

Danton pleaded guilty to a federal murder-for-hire conspiracy charge and could face seven to 10 years in prison when he is sentenced Oct. 22.

Danton was to have been tried in September with co-defendant Katie Wolfmeyer, and was scheduled for a pretrial hearing next week.

Danton, 23, and Wolfmeyer, a 19-year-old college student from a St. Louis suburb, faced identical conspiracy charges, with Wolfmeyer accused of trying to hire the would-be killer of Danton's agent, David Frost.

The would-be killer eventually went to police, and Frost was unharmed.

Danton has been jailed since his arrest April 16 in San Jose, Calif., a day after the San Jose Sharks eliminated the Blues from the playoffs.

Wolfmeyer has pleaded innocent and is to be tried in September.

Federal prosecutors have agreed to let Danton serve his possible prison time in his native Canada. U.S. District Judge William Steinhilb told Danton that the agreement may bar him from re-entering the United States.

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Braves back in first place

Giles returns with hot bat as Atlanta beats Montreal

The Associated Press

ATLANTA — Marcus Giles picked up right where he left off — in the majors, that is.

Giles hit two doubles in his first game in two months and Jaret Wright (7-5) won his fifth straight decision, leading the Atlanta Braves past the Montreal Expos 8-0 on Thursday night and into a tie for first place with Philadelphia in the NL East. Atlanta hasn't been in first since April 8, the third day of the season.

"He looked great, fielded flawlessly," Atlanta manager Bobby Cox said of Giles.

Giles, who broke his collarbone in a collision with center fielder Andrew Jones on May 15, went 2-for-5 to lead the Braves to their 13th victory in 16 games.

During a five-game rehab assignment with Class A Rome and Myrtle Beach just before the All-Star break, Giles batted only .067 (1-for-15). He had no such trouble against the Expos. After a flyout to right in his first at-bat, Giles doubled home runs in the third and fifth innings as Atlanta beat Montreal for the fourth straight time.

Giles was hitting .339 when he was injured, and his average went up to .341 after Thursday night.

"It was a long time to be out," he said. "It's sore, but my shoulder won't be an excuse for me for any part of this year. It's healed enough to do what I did tonight."

Wright (7-5) hasn't lost since May 22, when the Dodgers beat him 7-4. He gave up three hits in seven innings and allowed only one runner to reach third, combining with Kevin Grysbyk and Antonio Alfonseca on a five-hitter.

"It wasn't that Wright was so hard to hit — he didn't strike out many," Montreal outfielder Carl Everett said. "He just kept us off balance. We didn't get the timely hits, and they did."

It was the Braves' eighth shutout and the 14th time the Expos were blanked.

Chipper Jones went 3-for-5 for the Braves after arriving at the ballpark just 30 minutes before the game. A charter flight from his ranch in Texas was delayed and he skipped batting practice.

"I told him to fly somewhere tomorrow, too," Cox quipped.

Mets 3, Phillies 2 (11): Pitcher Roberto Hernandez couldn't handle Ty Wigginton's comebacker



St. Louis' So Taguchi bunts for a single in the fourth inning against the Cincinnati Reds on Thursday night in Cincinnati. The first-place Cardinals won 7-2.

with the bases loaded, allowing the host Mets to score the winning run. Hernandez (1-3) knocked the ball down with his bare hand but bounced the throw home as pinch-runner Vance Wilson slid across the plate.

Jose Parra (1-0) struck out two in a hitless 11th for his first major league victory since 1996 with Minnesota.

Dodgers 4, Diamondbacks 3: Shawn Green hit a grand slam in the eighth inning off Randy Choate, who took over after Randy Johnson struck out nine in seven scoreless innings for host Arizona.

Johnson, who also hit an RBI single, was pulled after 108 pitches. Brian Bruney got two outs while allowing hits to Cesar Izturis and Paul Lo Duca. Choate (0-1) then walked pinch-hitter Milton Bradley before Green's seventh career grand slam.

Wilson Alvarez (4-3) won in relief and Eric Gagne struck out all four batters he faced for his 24th save.

Giants 7, Rockies 5: Shawn Chacon hit the J.T. Snow with a pitch with the bases loaded for the go-ahead run in visiting San Francisco's four-run ninth.

Colorado led 4-3 behind five-plus innings from Jason Jennings, but Chacon (1-6) couldn't hold the lead in the ninth.

Cardinals 7, Reds 2: Albert Pujols and Scott Rolen hit two-run homers to lead visiting St. Louis.

Matt Morris (10-6) allowed eight hits in six innings to beat Jesus Sanchez (0-2). Morris also singled in a run.

Contreras' long stint buoyed by long balls

The Associated Press

DETROIT — Jose Contreras strode to the mound for the ninth inning, something he had never done as a major league pitcher.

And even though he allowed a leadoff single to end his outing, the former Cuban star felt he'd never pitched better.

Contreras allowed four hits and struck out seven and Alex Rodriguez hit two of New York's five home runs — the Yankees' only hits — in a 5-1 victory over the Detroit Tigers on Thursday night.

"Against the White Sox, I pitched a pretty good game, but it wasn't as good as this one," Contreras said through a translator. "As far as the major leagues go, those are the two best games I can think of."

"Prior to coming here, with the Cuban national team in 2001, I threw 11 innings against Japan. That was pretty good, but that was amateur, it doesn't compare."

Contreras (7-3) has been inconsistent since signing with New York before the 2003 season after defecting from Cuba. He has won seven of eight decisions but has a 5.17 ERA this season. His previous longest outing was with the Yankees last Sept. 23 at Chicago, when the Yankees clinched the AL East.

After Dmitri Young had a lead-off triple in the fourth, Contreras retired 15 straight until he allowed Bobby Higginson's single to start the ninth.

"Contreras was great — he beat I've seen," Tigers manager Alan Trammell said. "He had command of everything. We're a pretty good hitting team, but he was awfully good."

Rodriguez, Derek Jeter, Hideki Matsui and Kenny Lofton homered off Jeremy Bonderman (6-7) and Rodriguez added his 24th homer off Wilfredo Ledezma in the ninth.

Pirates 5, Devil Rays 4: David Newen hit a two-run homer in the ninth to help the Pirates win their second straight game, 5-4, over the Rays. Newen's homer was the first of his career.

AL Roundup

Daniel Cabrera (7-3) gave up three runs and five hits in six innings to beat Travis Harper (2-1).

The host Devil Rays had the bases loaded with two outs in the ninth, but Jorge Julio got Julio Lugo to fly out to right for his 13th save.

Royals 3, Twins 1: Mike Sweeney's RBI single in the first ended the host Royals' 31-inning scoreless drought against the Twins.

Kansas City had not scored off Minnesota since May 30. The Twins, who have lost four straight, outscored the Royals 25-0 in a three-game sweep last week.

Kyle Lohse (3-7), one of the shutout pitchers, was the loser Thursday.

Greinke (2-6) gave up a run and four hits in seven innings.

Mariners 2, Indians 1: Justin Leone hit his first major league homer — a two-run shot — to back Joel Pineiro (5-10) and help host Seattle end a nine-game losing streak.

Leone connected off Jake Westbrook (6-5) in the seventh.

Athletics 4, White Sox 2: Rich Harden (4-5) allowed four hits in eight innings, Eric Chavez had a home run and Bobby Crosby an RBI double against Jon Garland (7-6).

Magglio Ordonez hit a two-run homer for the visiting White Sox, whose four-game winning streak ended.

Angels 8, Red Sox 1: Darin Erstad homered and drove in three runs and Chone Figgins also had three RBIs for host Anaheim.

Jarrod Washburn (10-4) allowed three hits in seven innings, leading the Angels to their fourth straight victory.

Pitching a week after earning his first career shutout, the left-hander struck out three and walked two while beating Derek Lowe (7-9).

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Prior's exit spoils win

The Associated Press

CHICAGO — Mark Prior walked off the mound in the second inning, his head down and his status up in the air.

The right-hander left with discomfort in his elbow after pitching just 1½ innings Thursday night, putting the Chicago Cubs in a somber mood after a 4-1 comeback victory over Milwaukee.

"I don't know what I've got going right now," Prior said.

Prior, scheduled for an MRI, missed the first two months of the season with a sore right Achilles' tendon and tender elbow.

"You can't get any more worried than sick to your stomach," Cubs manager Dusty Baker said.

With one out in the second, Prior got Milwaukee's Chad Moeller to hit a grounder to Derek Lee at first. Prior started off

the mound to go to first before Lee made the play unassisted.

Trainer Dave Groeschner and pitching coach Larry Rothschild knew something was wrong with Prior, quickly going out to the mound to talk to him. He was then replaced by Glendon Rusch (5-1), who allowed three hits in 5½ scoreless innings.

"It's something I've been dealing with off and on since it happened in spring training," said Prior, who made his debut on the mound Thursday night. "Hopefully we can get some answers this time on what it really is. To be honest, I can't tell you where I'm at or where I'm going to be."

The Cubs are hoping that it's not the disabled list — again.

"You're just worried for him. You don't want it to be serious," Lee said. "You hope it's something he can get over quick."



Mark Prior (22) leaves the field in the second inning Thursday alongside trainer Dave Groeschner.

SPORTS

Marion Jones finds solace
in long jump victory in
U.S. Olympic trials, Page 28



Kendall's 'glorious day'



Skip Kendall is a 39-year-old American who is winless on the PGA Tour. His best finish in 13 majors is a tie for 10th in the 1998 PGA Championship.

Unheralded American grabs British Open lead

BY TIM DAHLBERG
The Associated Press

TRON, Scotland — The ultimate grinder is halfway to one of golf's ultimate prizes.

Skip Kendall, who has not won in 310 PGA Tour events, eagled the 16th hole from off the green Friday on his way to a 5-under 66 and the second-round lead in the British Open.

The improbable leader, who had to qualify to get in his third Open, stole the spotlight on a day when Masters champion Phil Mickelson recovered with a 66 to get back in contention and Colin Montgomerie thrilled the home-town fans with a move of his own. "It was a glorious day," Kendall said.

Indeed it was, with spectators enjoying light winds and warm temperatures off the Scottish Coast and players enjoying the scores Royal Troon was giving up.

Kendall holed a bunker shot on the third hole for a birdie to spark

his round, and rolled in a putt from off the front of the green on the par-5 16th to grab the lead from Thomas Levet of France.

"I was not paying attention to a lot of things you could get caught

up in out there," Kendall said.

Kendall, who came agonizingly close to winning earlier this year when he lost a playoff to Mickelson in the Bob Hope Classic, has won more than \$6.5 million on the tour.



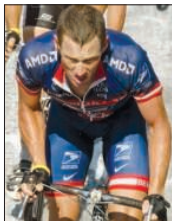
Phil Mickelson, above, tied Skip Kendall for Friday's lowest round.

THE OPEN CHAMPIONSHIP

Leading scores after the second round of the 133rd British Open at Royal Troon:

Skip Kendall	69-66-135	-7
Thomas Levet	66-70-136	-6
K.J. Choi	65-69-137	-5
Barry Lane	69-68-137	-5
Michael Campbell	67-71-138	-4
Ernie Els	69-69-138	-4
Todd Hamilton	71-67-138	-4
Colin Montgomerie	69-69-138	-4
Vijay Singh	68-70-138	-4
Rettief Goosen	69-70-139	-3
Phil Mickelson	73-66-139	-3

Full-field scores on Page 26.



Armstrong makes a big move in the Tour's first major mountain stage

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Yankees expand lead over Red Sox to eight games; Braves move into first-place tie

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Securing Bryant is just the start of the Lakers' uphill climb

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Air Force football players face court-martial

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